2016 MALAWI STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Integrated Development in Malawi: Stakeholder Perceptions and Practices

January 2017

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INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT IN MALAWI: STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES

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DISCLAIMER

The authors’ views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2013–2018 USAID/Malawi Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) aims to improve the quality of life of Malawians through three Development Objectives (DOs): (1) improvement in social development, (2) increase in sustainable livelihoods, and (3) assurance that citizen rights and responsibilities are exercised. To better achieve this, USAID/Malawi has applied a hypothesis that states, “If assistance is integrated then development results will be enhanced, more sustainable, and lead to achievements of our CDCS goal: Malawians’ quality of life improved” (USAID/Malawi, CDCS Document, 2013).

USAID/Malawi awarded Social Impact, Inc. (SI), a five-year (2014–2018) contract to conduct an impact evaluation (IE) of the CDCS development hypothesis and an annual Stakeholder Analysis (SHA). The first SHA was conducted in 2015; this report presents findings and recommendations from the second SHA, conducted in Malawi during September and October of 2016.

PURPOSE AND GUIDING QUESTIONS
The annual SHA is designed to help USAID/Malawi understand what works and what requires improvement regarding the CDCS strategy in the targeted districts of Balaka, Machinga, and Lilongwe Rural, and to aid in the interpretation of findings from an overarching impact evaluation. The 2016 SHA aims to understand how integration is being implemented on the ground and the implications of integration on USAID/Malawi, implementing partners (IPs), and local district governments. The 2016 SHA addresses the following questions:

1. At USAID/Malawi, what are the roles and responsibilities of individuals in each sector to manage the integrated development approach?
2. At USAID/Malawi, what are organizational changes that have been required (and made, to date) to realize USAID/Malawi’s CDCS objectives through the integrated development approach?
3. How do district-level government entities (that USAID has fostered recently) collaborate with IPs and USAID in implementing the integration initiative?
4. What are the roles played by key district stakeholders in planning, delivery, and sustainability of programs supported by USAID?
5. To what degree do stakeholders perceive that current practices to manage the 3Cs are sufficient? What can be improved to achieve greater results and improve efficiency?

DESIGN, METHODS, AND LIMITATIONS
The evaluation team used a mixed-methods approach to address the evaluation questions. For the qualitative component of the SHA, the team conducted 46 group interviews (GIs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) with stakeholders using semi-structured interview guides. The interviewees included personnel from USAID/Malawi, IPs, and the Government of Malawi, at the macro-level (where they have a bird’s-eye view but are not directly involved in implementation), at the meso-level (where they manage integrated activity implementation), and at the micro-level (where they work on the ground and are directly involved in implementation). Six specific integrated activities (IAs) were examined through the interviews to fully understand how implementation is occurring from multiple perspectives. In addition, data were gathered using a short Integration Gauge (IG) survey conducted among 11 IPs representing 10 integrated activities (IAs) to further explore IP perceptions of integration through numeric ratings of the quality of integration with their partner organizations.
KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

USAID/MALAWI ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES (Q1)
There appears to be a clear division of labor within USAID/Malawi among the various offices. The Front Office and USAID/Malawi has set integration as a priority, as evidenced by its prominent role within the CDCS. Since the 2015 SHA, this has become more concrete within the Contracts Office, which is working with Technical Offices to create integrated funding. This is critical, as one of the identified obstacles to integration is the difficulty of integrating funding streams, a critical first step in starting integration from an activity’s inception. However, effectively doing so requires that USAID/Malawi fully embrace its leadership role in identifying opportunities for integrated development, rather than relying on IPs to do it.

The Program Office plays a key role in facilitating and championing integration. It organizes stakeholder meetings, which, although some within USAID/Malawi have questioned their utility, others, particularly among IPs, feel they continue to be useful. A change since the 2015 SHA involved branching out from just the all-partner meetings focused on speed-dating. The 2016 meeting focused on food security and drought crisis issues was especially fruitful, from most participants’ perspectives, as a means of developing cross-sector integrated activities and acquiring a common starting point.

Technical Offices play a critical role both in vision setting and managing integration efforts. They play a central role in identifying possible IAs, working with others throughout USAID/Malawi. One critical role for Agreement Officer’s Representatives (AORs) and Contract Officer’s Representatives (CORs) within this is vetting IA ideas put forward at all-partner meetings and then ensuring that they are developed afterward through planning meetings. Without these, an IA will probably not develop. AORs/CORs also have the task of managing IAs once they are implemented. While this management role is in general consistent with AOR/COR responsibilities, it is important to note that it does add to the workload. Thus, managing integration activities may not always get the attention it requires, or other activity responsibilities, especially in non-focus districts, may slip.

USAID/MALAWI ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES MADE FOR REALIZING THE CDCS OBJECTIVES THROUGH INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT (Q2)
USAID/Malawi has made several critical organizational changes in the past year that have facilitated integrated development. There appear to be increased efforts to design integration into new activities, starting with integrating funding streams, designing activities with integration in mind, and asking bidders on new activities to propose specific IAs. While these efforts may work well for advancing CDCS objectives, it remains to be seen to what extent integration will succeed. That said, some existing similarly planned activities, such as the Supporting the Efforts of Partners project (STEPS), suggest that there is reason to be hopeful.

For existing activities, USAID/Malawi is actualizing its greater flexibility in accepting both cross- and intra-sectoral IAs. USAID/Malawi is providing more guidance on integration and is also focusing on the quality as opposed to quantity of integration. Although some stakeholders still feel that they are being asked to do integration for integration’s sake, it appears that this perception is diminishing. However, an issue that remains to be addressed is that successful integration appears to rely on individual personalities and champions. As USAID/Malawi increasingly institutionalizes integration, this may also diminish.

USAID/Malawi is also increasingly holding IPs accountable for their integration efforts through their Integration Work Plans and implementation of DevResults. Despite these efforts, there was evidence of approvals by CORs/AORs of work plans for IAs that were not always fully synchronized across partners. Indeed, several IPs indicated that they would only feel accountable with specific indicators for measuring integration.

USAID/Malawi is increasingly engaging with the Government of Malawi (GOM) at the district level. The efforts made so far, specifically the district-level meetings, are good first steps. However, considerable work remains to be done to identify and operationalize appropriate ways to improve the effectiveness of such engagement. This is most evident in
that GOM officials generally expressed a desire for greater communication with USAID/Malawi and/or its IPs, but did not recognize the district-level meetings as an effort in that direction. Also, district-level GOM officials were not prepared to take a leadership role in those meetings. In addition, outputs intended to facilitate communication between USAID and district-level GOM officials, such as the activity matrix, do not appear to have had their intended effect. While the meetings may not need to be eliminated, there was a clear need for USAID/Malawi to make more efforts to ensure that the meetings serve their intended purpose.

One area that could benefit from organizational change is the mindset around the time and resources for integration. Findings from both the interviews and the IG survey indicate that integration can be an additional burden on workloads and resources, but this seems yet to be addressed well by USAID/Malawi.

ROLE PLAYED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF MALAWI AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL (Q3)
The GOM role varies considerably depending on the activity. Roles range from acting only as a “gatekeeper,” approving USAID activities generally and IAs specifically, to being a key “partner” implementing activities with USAID/Malawi IP support. While the GOM’s “partner” role is relatively clear, since it is a main implementer, the “gatekeeper” function is less clear. To some extent, variation in the GOM’s effectiveness in this role relates to USAID’s communication with both the central and district governments. Some stakeholders felt that USAID should only communicate with the central government and leave district-level communication to IPs. However, others note that this indirect communication is not particularly effective. One of the main concerns expressed by GOM stakeholders is that they are only asked for input after USAID/Malawi has made key decisions. Overall, it seems that USAID/Malawi could make greater efforts to communicate both more directly and frequently with district-level officials to ensure that development plans are, in fact, in line with district priorities.

The “leading from behind” approach taken by GOM in district-level meetings may not be effective in advancing integration. The GOM does not appear to have been ready for a leadership role in district meetings and may need more coaching on this before being ready to take it on fully. Likewise, while the materials developed by USAID/Malawi for district-level meetings would have been greatly appreciated, it does not appear that they were disseminated to all the appropriate people, though the reason for this remains unclear.

ROLES PLAYED BY KEY DISTRICT STAKEHOLDERS (Q4)
IAs play the most critical role in the planning, delivery, and sustainability of USAID-supported activities generally and IAs specifically. Regarding IAs, successfully fulfilling this role requires coordinating and collaborating with both IA partners and local counterparts. To this end, face-to-face meetings play a central role in planning efforts to come to agreement about who is doing what, when, and where. Indeed, other forms of communication are also used, but they are not as effective as meetings in reaching critical decisions, especially for IAs, to both ensure maximum coverage and avoid duplicating efforts.

Some IPs appear to have fully embraced integrated development and work effectively with their partners to implement IAs, while others have not. This is evident in differences in IPs’ IA work plans, in which some partners did not mention IAs they were supposedly working on or described them in different terms than did their partners. This, among other evidence, suggests ongoing communication issues as well as a lack of true collaboration and coordination for some. One key limitation to fully embracing integrated development that was raised by several IPs is that they do not feel accountable for doing so, in large part because they do not have to report on any indicators related to their IAs.

SUFFICIENCY OF CURRENT PRACTICES TO MANAGE THE 3Cs (Q5)
Current practices to manage the 3Cs has improved since the last SHA to an extent. The improvements appear to have occurred in large part owing to increased clarity in their definitions. This is most evident in partners’ successful efforts at collaboration and coordination to implement their IAs. Virtually all six IAs that were the focus of the 2016 SHA provided concrete evidence of their implementation of the 3Cs. That said, a notable issue emerged from the interviews

2016 Malawi CDCS Stakeholder Analysis 3
that indicated an apparent disconnect between USAID and IPs in their perspectives on the 3Cs. While USAID has concerns about oversaturation both within the mission and for IPs, at least some IPs indicated that this is not the case. IPs look to USAID for greater leadership and direction setting, while simultaneously actively working to coordinate and collaborate.

*All stakeholders expressed significant frustration regarding communication problems.* There were communication problems reported within USAID, between USAID and its IPs, among IPs, and between USAID and the GOM. However, IP-to-IP communication was the least problematic among these, reflecting the concerted efforts by IPs over the course of IA implementation to improve coordination and collaboration. The most challenging communication appears to be between USAID and the GOM. As noted above, USAID appears to largely communicate with the GOM through IPs. This indirect form of communication may not be the best way to ensure effective coordination or collaboration. This is arguably one of the most important areas for USAID to address going forward to ensure success in meeting CDCS objectives.

**SI RECOMMENDATIONS TO USAID/MALAWI**

**PLAN INTEGRATION FROM THE BEGINNING**

*USAID/Malawi should continue to plan integration into new activities as they are developed.* This will ensure that IPs are contractually obligated to engage in integration. In doing so, USAID/Malawi should facilitate IAs by ensuring that the resources necessary for implementation are in place. There is also a need for mechanisms in place to track whether integration is happening.

*It is critical that USAID play a leadership role in the IA planning process both for existing and new activities.* Likewise, USAID/Malawi should provide IPs the space, time, and support needed to undertake robust planning on multiple levels with mission guidance. As the findings suggest, USAID/Malawi staff have not consistently been involved in IA planning processes or held IPs accountable for it. This is evident in the fact that some work plans did not describe IAs in the same way or even include all of the IAs in which an IP was involved. To ensure effective integration, AORs/CORs in particular need to be more fully involved with their IPs in the IA planning process. This includes coordinating and collaborating with their counterparts within USAID/Malawi. While this is happening to some extent, it could be further institutionalized. However, to ensure this, USAID/Malawi also needs to recognize the additional workload this demands and adjust accordingly.

**ENSURE A WIN-WIN FOR ALL**

*USAID/Malawi should continue to ensure that identified IAs are mutually beneficial to all parties involved.* It was clear from the study that IPs are increasingly seeing the IAs in which they are involved as mutually beneficial. It is important to continue this trend. This also requires maintaining USAID/Malawi’s flexibility in considering both intra- and cross-sectoral IAs as legitimate. USAID/Malawi should also consider vetting IAs with districts (or requiring IPs to demonstrate this vetting as a prerequisite for work plan approval) to make sure that the proposed activity also benefits the district. This should be considered a critical element of district engagement for both USAID/Malawi and IPs.

**INSTITUTIONALIZE ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE WITHIN USAID/MALAWI**

*USAID/Malawi must continue to restructure at least its processes if not its actual organizational structure to institutionalize organizational change.* The fundamental shift in the way programming is undertaken to ensure effective implementation for integration development to achieve USAID/Malawi’s CDCS objectives has already begun. As stated in the 2015 SHA, it may be too big a lift to actually reorganize USAID/Malawi away from sectors. However, effective integration requires institutionalization of the processes that facilitate it, such as processes that enable staff to work across sectors. One critical element of this is recognizing additional burden in time and resources the organizational changes require and adjusting workloads accordingly. In addition, USAID/Malawi should maintain changes already made in
how new projects are funded, designed and procured, and contracted. One critical element to fully institutionalize integration that remains to be addressed is how projects are monitored and evaluated. This is discussed further below. Finally, institutionalization is critical to integrated development because it depersonalizes it. Institutionalization will help reduce the need for integration champions with USAID/Malawi and IPs and also ensure sustainability despite turnover among USAID/Malawi personnel.

**IMPROVE THE FOUNDATIONAL C: COMMUNICATION**

*USAID/Malawi needs to improve its communication with district governments.* The 3Cs are not possible without effective communication. As indicated in the findings, communication continues to be a serious pain point for integrated development. This is the crucial factor in facilitating IA development, implementation, and management, as it is fundamental to effective coordination and collaboration. Although communication has improved within USAID/Malawi and between USAID/Malawi and its IPs, the biggest challenge for USAID/Malawi and IPs is more effectively communicating with district governments. The district meetings were a good first step in this direction, but there is an obvious need to clearly identify who the right people to talk with are and ensuring that they are present at critical meetings. Likewise, when USAID/Malawi shares valuable resources like the materials developed for district meetings, it needs to ensure that they get into the right hands. Finally, USAID/Malawi should establish some structures to ensure ongoing regular communication and collaboration with the GOM. The Local Government Accountability Project (LGAP) may provide the mechanism for doing this going forward, but if not, another approach should be developed.

**ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRACKING OF INTEGRATION NEEDS TO BE IN PLACE**

Organizational change involves integrating programming within and across sectors to facilitate achieving USAID/Malawi’s development objectives and, ultimately, its goal of improving quality of life for Malawians. However, despite the centrality of integrated development in the CDCS, currently there are no indicators and objectives explicitly defined for integration. In addition, there are no targets beyond the intent for project saturation in three focus districts. Therefore, it continues to be difficult for USAID/Malawi staff and IPs to know what they should be working toward for integration and whether they have sufficiently integrated their programming. SI recommends that USAID/Malawi’s latest structure of a process mapping to track progress toward integration be operationalized, carefully examined for effectiveness, and improved, if needed. Also, simple indicators can be developed to track integration success and challenges. This is critical to providing a means of holding both USAID/Malawi and IPs accountable. It is also critical for facilitating ongoing collaboration, learning, and adaptation.
INTRODUCTION

United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/Malawi’s Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) for 2013–2018 aims to improve Malawians’ quality of life through three Development Objectives (DOs): (i) improvement in social development, (ii) increase in sustainable livelihoods, and (iii) assurance that citizen rights and responsibilities are exercised. To better achieve this, USAID/Malawi’s development hypothesis states, “If assistance is integrated then development results will be enhanced, more sustainable, and lead to achievements of our CDCS goal: Malawians’ quality of life improved” (USAID/Malawi, CDCS Document, 2013).

USAID/Malawi is applying a collaboration, learning, and adaptation (CLA) approach to realizing a dynamic CDCS strategy that evolves and adapts from on-the-ground learning. One critical element of this strategy is an impact evaluation (IE) aimed at assessing the validity of USAID/Malawi’s CDCS development hypothesis and informing further integration efforts and future planning. In May 2014, the USAID/Malawi awarded Social Impact, Inc. (SI), a USA-based international development management consulting firm, a five-year contract (2014–2018) to conduct the IE.

In addition to the IE and to further increase opportunities for CLA, USAID/Malawi requested that SI conduct an annual Stakeholder Analysis (SHA) over the same five-year period to continue local stakeholder consultations that began during the CDCS design process. The SHAs are intended to help USAID/Malawi understand what is and is not working in its integration strategy as well as inform the IE. Through the SHA, SI examines the current state of integration at various levels and how it is implemented to describe integration outcomes, successes, and challenges, and ultimately, develop recommendations that detail the environment needed to make integration a success. By doing so, the SHA complements the CDCS IE by providing regular feedback on progress toward integrated development.

This report presents the findings, conclusions, and recommendations from the 2016 SHA, conducted in Malawi during September and October 2016.

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BACKGROUND: MALAWI CDCS INTEGRATION INITIATIVE

The 2013–2018 USAID/Malawi CDCS aims to improve the Malawians’ quality of life. To achieve this, USAID/Malawi has adopted an integrated development approach that includes joint planning, leveraging resources, evaluating outcomes together, and a holistic coordinated response that meets district development objectives (USAID/Malawi, CDCS Document, 2013).

USAID/Malawi’s “3C approach” is the platform for operationalizing integration. The 3Cs are:

- **Co-location** of USAID interventions/activities
- **Coordination** within USAID and with other development partners (DPs)
- **Collaboration** between USAID and the Government of Malawi (GOM), district authorities, other development partners, civil society organizations (CSOs), and community-based organizations (CBOs)

USAID/Malawi has targeted USAID-funded activities in three districts—Balaka, Machinga, and Lilongwe Rural—for implementation of integrated development. This is based on the expectation that there would be a saturation of complementary programming focused on decentralization and capacity building in these districts across all sectors: Education (EDU), Health, Population and Nutrition (HPN), Sustainable Economic Growth (SEG)—including Agriculture (AG)—and Democracy and Governance (DG).

USAID/Malawi envisioned that fully integrated activities in these three districts would involve more than one implementer working in multiple sectors co-locating, coordinating, and collaborating to achieve USAID’s development objectives. Co-location (i.e. geographic proximity of IP activities or targeting beneficiary groups) is a necessary, but insufficient condition to effect integration, because IPs may not voluntarily work together. Therefore, IPs that hold USAID awards in these districts that pre-date the new CDCS are requested and facilitated to coordinate and collaborate in their work plans across sectors and to intentionally work together. New awards are required to do so since 2015, by including it as part of their proposals. More on USAID/Malawi’s approach to integration as well as experiences with integration outside of Malawi is available in the SI report *Implementing Integrated Development in Malawi.*

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METHODS AND LIMITATIONS

The annual SHA provides USAID/Malawi with a mechanism for gauging CDCS integration strategy effectiveness in the targeted districts of Balaka, Machinga, and Lilongwe Rural, and facilitates interpreting findings from the overarching IE. Through consultations with local stakeholders, including GOM officials and USAID implementing partners (IPs), the SHA examines how the integrated development implementation process is unfolding. More specifically, it identifies what is working well and where there is room for improvement. By drawing on this local knowledge and comparing various stakeholder perceptions, USAID/Malawi seeks to strengthen strategic integration. The annual SHA will inform USAID/Malawi portfolio reviews scheduled for early January each year.

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS 2015

The first SHA (2015) focused on an initial examination of the integration process: how IPs are “doing” integration, the guidance provided by USAID/Malawi as a mission, and identification of successes and challenges involved in implementing projects in an integrated way. Data collection focused on IPs, with a few interviews with USAID staff and other stakeholders. The key findings from the 2015 SHA included the following:

- **Overall, most IPs defer to the USAID definition of integration and recognize the integral role of the 3Cs of Co-location, Coordination, and Collaboration.** In general terms, IPs see integration as a process for working together to reach common goals. IPs clarified that while they may be working toward a common integration goal, they may simultaneously be working toward distinct project-level outcomes. While together the IPs may be working to increase their outreach, they may be doing so to accomplish various objectives, such as improving literacy rates or raising awareness about Malaria prevention.
- **IPs and USAID representatives also saw that taking a cross-sectoral approach was a central feature of the USAID definition but raised doubts about whether all integration activities had to be cross-sectoral to “count” as integrated.** To further operationalize USAID/Malawi’s integration definition, a more nuanced look could be taken at how the various stakeholders define the 3Cs and where their own individual definitions may diverge from USAID/Malawi’s.
- District representatives shared that they still were not being fully integrated into the process. The cases that most actively engaged districts happened through Democracy and Governance (DG) projects that capitalized on IPs’ sectoral expertise. In those cases, the DG IPs worked to train district officials on good governance practices while working with other IPs to develop district government technical skills in the areas of education, health, and agriculture.

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS 2016

The 2016 SHA builds on findings from SHA 2015 and takes a deeper dive into how integration is being implemented on the ground as well as the implications of that for USAID/Malawi, IPs, and local district governments. To that end, data collection focused on six specific integration activities (IAs) involving 11 different IPs and their sub-partners as well as relevant GOM line staff. In addition, to obtain a more macro perspective on the state of integrated development, interviews also included USAID staff and Malawi District Government representatives. The 2016 SHA is guided by the following broad questions:

1. At USAID/Malawi, what are the roles and responsibilities of individuals in each sector to manage the integrated development approach?
2. At USAID/Malawi, what are organizational changes that have been required (and made, to date) to realize USAID/Malawi’s CDCS objectives through the integrated development approach?
3. How do district-level government entities (that USAID has fostered recently) collaborate with IPs and USAID in implementing the integration initiative?

4. What are the roles played by key district stakeholders in planning, delivery, and sustainability of programs supported by USAID?

5. To what degree do stakeholders perceive that current practices to manage the 3Cs are sufficient? What can be improved to achieve greater results and improve efficiency?

**METHODOLOGY**

Qualitative data collection and analysis methods are used for the SHA to appropriately address the process orientation of the questions and complement the quantitative nature of the IE. SI collected data in September 2016 through group and key informant interviews (KIIs) with various stakeholders using semi-structured data collection instruments. These data are supplemented by a closed-ended Integration Gauge tool that further explored IPs’ perceptions though ratings of their collaboration and integration with their partners.

For this report, an integrated activity refers to actual initiatives where two or more parties go beyond co-location to also collaborate and coordinate to implement a particular intervention, such as training, goods or services delivery, advocacy, etc. The level of coordination and collaboration is evident in work plans. To focus discussions, particularly with IPs and the GOM, on the actual implementation of integrated activities, SI focused on six specific integrated activities implemented by 11 different IPs (see Table 2). Integration activities were selected from among those formalized in Fiscal Year 2016 IP Integration Work Plans. The selection was aimed at capturing a range of characteristics including all USAID technical sectors, older and newer activities, cross- and intra-sectoral integration, and activities in all three target districts. Although USAID/Malawi guidance indicated that integrated activities should ideally be cross-sectoral, as noted in the 2015 SHA, SI also found many examples of intra-sectoral collaboration, a trend that continued in 2016.
**Table 2: Focal Integration Activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Integrated activity: Collaboration as outlined in work plan</th>
<th>IP 1</th>
<th>IP 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Care group coordination:</strong> IPs coordinate via joint meetings to divide target areas for care groups between INVC and Njira. Njira provides PM2A rations through care groups; INVC shares attendance with Njira to assist in PM2A targeting in INVC area.</td>
<td>DAI (INVC)</td>
<td>PCI (Njira)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leveling environmental messages in children’s reading material:</strong> IPs share responsibility for developing content for Standard 3 supplementary readers.</td>
<td>RTI (EGRA)³</td>
<td>Tetra Tech (PERFORM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexual and reproductive health referral and education materials for adolescent school girls:</strong> IPs collaborate on referral of adolescents, data sharing between facilities and places of referral, and development of technical content for brochures and informational leaflets.</td>
<td>Save the Children (ASPIRE)</td>
<td>JHPIEGO (SSDI-Services)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Integrated supportive supervision at health facilities:</strong> IPs share supportive supervision schedules, facilitate biannual joint supervision visits at health facilities, and work together to follow up on action plans developed during visits.</td>
<td>Abt Associates (SSDI Systems)</td>
<td>JHPIEGO (SSDI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Onsite mentoring and action plan assistance for local partners:</strong> FISH shares with STEPS any capacity needs identified through other partnerships; STEPS and FISH coordinate to strengthen performance of FISH’s partners.</td>
<td>Counterpart (STEPS)</td>
<td>PACT (FISH)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teen clubs:</strong> Support to adolescents living with HIV through teen club launches and trainings. IPs hold joint meetings with District Health Officers (DHOs), District Health Management Teams (DHMTs), facilities, and other key stakeholders to increase support to adolescents living with HIV through teen club launches and trainings.</td>
<td>Baylor College of Medicine (Tingathe)</td>
<td>Dignitas (Support for Health Systems Strengthening)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, to examine how implementation is happening on the ground, SI spoke with stakeholders representing a variety of perspectives, with interviewees within each group working at various levels of the integration process. Table 3 identifies the key interviewee categories within each stakeholder group and their levels of involvement. Macro-level stakeholders have a bird’s-eye view, as they are not directly involved in implementation. Meso-level stakeholders are involved in integrated activity implementation from a managerial perspective. Micro-level stakeholders are working on the ground and are directly involved in implementation. To capture the extent to which activities may be truly integrated, whenever possible, group interviews (GI) with meso- and micro-level respondents were held with those working on a particular IA. Likewise, a few GIs were held with macro-level respondents within USAID/Malawi. However, KIIs were held with most informants at that level.

³ The project has transitioned into MERIT at the time of this report in December 2016.
Table 3: Stakeholder Groups & Interviewee Category by Level of Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Group</th>
<th>Level of Involvement</th>
<th>Interviewee Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>Macro</td>
<td>Program Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Contract Officer (CO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Technical Office Directors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Program Development and Analysis Officers (PDAs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meso</td>
<td>Contract Officer’s Representative (COR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Agreement Officer’s Representative (AOR) for activities involved in selected IAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Micro</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing partner</td>
<td>Macro</td>
<td>Chief of Party (COP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meso</td>
<td>Project Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Micro</td>
<td>Project Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Line/Field Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government of Malawi</td>
<td>Macro</td>
<td>District Offices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meso</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Micro</td>
<td>Line/Field Staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SEMI-STRUCTURED GROUP AND KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

To gain perspectives on experiences with integration from all relevant stakeholder groups, SI conducted GIs and KIIs with USAID staff, integration activity IPs, and district-level GOM officials. Within USAID, these included the Program Office, Senior Management, Program Development and Analysis Officers (PDAs), USAID sectoral team leads (HPN, SEG, EDU, and DG), and USAID Agreement Officer’s Representatives (AORs)/Contract Officer’s Representatives (CORs) for the selected focal IAs. In addition, the team interviewed Malawi District and Local Government representatives in the three focus districts of Balaka, Machinga, and Rural Lilongwe, and IPs (prime and sub-contractors) representing the six focal IAs.

For the IPs, separate interviews were conducted with senior management (Chief of Party (COP)/Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP)), project managers, and field and line staff. Ideally, project managers and field and line staff were interviewed with their counterparts from the IPs with which they were partnered on IAs, but this was not possible in many cases. There were two objectives to this approach. First, the idea was to see if there was a common understanding of the IA and how it was to be implemented within each of the IPs at each of the relevant levels (senior management, project management, and field and line staff). Second, the GIs among similarly positioned IP staff working together on an IA were intended to facilitate some observation about the extent and nature of their interactions in implementing the IA.

Social Impact interviewed each individual or group using semi-structured guides developed for each type of entity (Annex I). The questions captured perceptions about how integrated activities are being implemented. Specifically, they examined organizational and individual roles and responsibilities, what it takes to manage an integrated activity for USAID/Malawi and its partners, organizational changes required to facilitate implementing IAs, and what could be improved to enhance integrated development effectiveness. The tools were pilot tested and revised prior to data gathering.

A total of 46 interviews were completed. Annex II shows respondents targeted and interviewed for all data collection activities. When permitted by the respondents, GIs and KIIs were audio recorded to allow subsequent transcription.
INTEGRATION GAUGE

SI adapted the Wilder Collaboration Index, a well-researched and tested collaboration assessment tool, to the USAID/Malawi context to help gather information from IPs to assess whether and how they are working together by coordinating and collaborating with one another in an integrated way. These integration partners include those organizations and institutions that work together to implement an integrated activity as planned by the IPs in the study districts. The tool is designed to track broad changes throughout a project’s lifespan. SI’s modified tool, here called an ‘Integration Gauge’, includes 45 questions intended to measure general perceptions of integration among collaborators. The questions are grouped into 20 categories under six themes: collaboration environment, membership characteristics, process and structure, communication, purpose, and resources. Respondents are asked to respond to a positive statement about the collaboration on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), with options for “not applicable” and “don’t know.”

SI used the tool to gather data from IPs working on USAID-supported projects in Balaka, Machinga, and Lilongwe Rural. SI administered the tool to IPs electronically via SurveyMonkey after SHA fieldwork. For the 2015 SHA, respondents were asked to respond to the questions based on their choice of a single most developed or completed integration activity at that time. To avoid concerns about possible “cherry picking” and to be consistent with the qualitative data collection focused on specific IAs, the 2016 Integration Gauge respondents were asked to focus their responses on a specific integrated activity SI had pre-selected for them. SI selected each of the six IAs that were a focus for qualitative interviews (listed above), with surveys requested of both parties to each IA. Additional activities were selected from Integration Activity Work Plans of other IPs that were not represented by qualitative interviews, with surveys sent to both parties. Having a focal activity allowed respondents to be targeted in their responses. Therefore, results for the two years are broadly comparable.

A total of 24 IPs representing 15 IAs were sent emails requesting that they complete the Integration Gauge. Of those, 11 responded, of which two responses reflected a matched pair working on the same IA.

DATA ANALYSIS

As a quality control measure, SI reviewed all key informant interview (KII) and group interview (GI) transcripts for accuracy and corrected them as needed based on the recordings. SI then coded transcripts using Atlas.ti software. Codes were used to identify first-level domains for analysis. SI then further analyzed these domains to assess the relationship among them to construct narratives in response to each of the 2016 SHA questions. This approach permitted the team to assess convergence and divergence among respondents in their understanding and experience implementing integrated development. It also facilitated comparative analysis across stakeholder categories and levels of involvement in implementing IAs. This approach provided insight on the practical approaches to and issues with implementing integrated development. It also provided a context for successes and challenges encountered by all stakeholders.

The responses gathered through the Integration Gauge were coded by scales of 1-5, with 1 representing “strongly disagree” and 5 “strongly agree.” “Neutral” was coded as 3, and “don’t know” and “not applicable” were removed. Individuals’ responses were averaged within each category (groups of 2-4 thematic questions) and then tabulated according to “agree” (category average response of 4 or more) and “disagree” (category average below 3). SI also reports average scores under each category, and interprets the scores as follows: scores of 4.0 or higher show strength, scores between 3.0 and 3.9 show marginal concerns that may require attention, and scores of 2.9 or lower indicate concerns that should be addressed.

LIMITATIONS OF THE SHA METHODOLOGY

Recall that the 2015 SHA methodology was primarily designed to examine the initial stages of integration in Malawi. In contrast, the 2016 SHA methodology focuses on taking a deeper dive into how integrated activities are being implemented. While this approach could be modified in subsequent SHAs, SI recommends maintaining a similar approach going forward to enhance the opportunities for comparative analysis. While the methodology adequately

2016 Malawi CDCS Stakeholder Analysis 12
addresses the SHA guiding questions, it also has some limitations, as discussed below. However, it should be noted that SI does not consider these limitations to change the findings, conclusions, and recommendations in this report. Nonetheless, improving on these items may increase the strength and consistency of results.

**Limited sample scope.** Since USAID is focusing its integration efforts in three districts, the sample was primarily limited to IPs and other stakeholders working in these districts. In addition, to dive more deeply into how integration is being implemented, SI focused on only six specific IAs, based on the criteria outlined above, to more fully understand how the implementation process is unfolding from multiple perspectives. This is a non-representative selection of IAs and therefore cannot be used to generalize across all IAs. It is, therefore, possible our findings portray either fewer or greater challenges than are being experienced across all IAs.

It may be possible in subsequent years to broaden the sample to some extent. However, to ensure a rich and nuanced analysis of IA implementation, SI recommends maintaining a relatively small sample for the qualitative elements of the SHA. This is in keeping with a qualitative approach that emphasizes depth over breadth.

**Integration Gauge data do not cover multiple activities.** Given the desire to examine specific experiences with integrated activities rather than abstractions, respondents to the IG tool were asked to focus their responses on a single pre-selected activity. This is slightly different from the approach taken for the 2015 SHA, where respondents were asked to select the most complete IA as their response focal point. As noted above, it is likely that some IPs chose their most successful activity when responding to the IG questions, although they may have been engaged in multiple integrated activities at various degrees and stages. While this change may slightly limit the strict comparability of the 2015 and 2016 results, it addresses one of the limitations from last year’s study, which was thought to have limited usefulness because of potential bias toward successful cases. Further, the data primarily focused on capturing perceptions related to collaboration, without much on coordination and co-location, the other Cs of Malawi’s CDCS operational approach. However, many collaboration questions also capture coordination. The more significant limitation in the 2016 SHA with respect to the IG is that the sample was small because of the limited number of IPs that had submitted Integration Work Plans (i.e., eligible respondents) and non-response from some IPs, perhaps due to busy workloads. Nonetheless, as the IG is only meant to provide a rough picture, the limited sample should not be too problematic.

**Limited information on actual implementation.** Because of time and budget constraints, the methods used in this SHA only included KIIs and IG and not any in-depth observations as case studies, sitting in partner meetings where work plans were developed, or field visits to observe the actual implementation of activities to directly verify KII findings. This limitation was overcome to some extent with the modifications to the 2016 SHA methodology focusing on specific IAs. However, case studies or at least greater observational work could help in gathering details of any single activity or activities between partners at all staff levels and stages and could also help capture networks beyond the main integrating partners that can influence outcomes. Direct observation would allow the team to validate processes for integration described during interviews and, perhaps, capture more of the nuanced details on how integration is accomplished. A greater attempt to capture observational data should be made going forward.
FINDINGS

In the sections below, SI presents a summary of the outcomes of the six selected integration activities as well as the SHA findings in response to each of the five guiding questions listed above. However, to reduce redundancy given considerable overlap in the findings related to each question and to integrate additional useful information not specifically related to any question, the findings are organized as follows:

1. Program Office Activities to Facilitate Integration
2. Roles and Responsibilities Among Stakeholders: USAID, IPs, and GOM (Questions 1, 3, and 4)
3. Sufficiency of Current Practices to Manage the 3Cs (Question 5) plus the “Foundational C”—Communication
4. USAID Organizational Changes Required (and made to date) to Realize CDCS Objectives (Question 2), plus Challenges and Successes
5. Integration Gauge: IPs’ Perceptions on Strength of Collaboration

Throughout the findings discussions, to the extent possible, frequencies related to specific themes are provided. However, to protect respondents’ anonymity and confidentiality, these are organized by stakeholder groups (USAID, IP, GOM) and level of involvement (macro, meso, micro).

SUMMARY OF INTEGRATION ACTIVITY OUTCOMES

INTEGRATION ACTIVITY: CARE GROUP COORDINATION

While DAI (INVC) included many integration activities with multiple implementing partners in the organization’s integration work plan, the care group coordination IA was with PCI (Njira). DAI’s key action surrounding the PCI integration was to “identify CMAM beneficiaries to refer malnourished children to Supplementary Feeding Program.” In PCI’s work plan, key actions described were joint meetings between senior management and government, a jointly carried out mapping exercise of INVC care groups, and coordinating with INVC to ensure that new Njira care groups are only formed in areas that INVC has not targeted. Each of these activities was mentioned by SHA respondents at least once. There was particular enthusiasm about the effects of the integration on duplication: in three of the six interviews (USAID: 1 meso; IP: 1 macro, 1 meso) conducted within the care group coordination activity, respondents cited avoidance of service duplication as an integration success. Respondents also generally agreed that the quality of services was improved for beneficiaries because of the integration. In four of the six interviews (USAID: 2 meso; IP: 1 macro, 1 meso), respondents discussed at least one improvement in service quality that resulted directly from the integration. One USAID respondent said:

Well, well we avoided duplication, I think it was also in that [we] provided a better service. Because if you look at the INVC program, while it was doing the care group behavior change and so forth, it didn’t have the resources, you know, like food to give pregnant lactating women and under-two children. So, by bringing the two programs together, I think that helped, you know, provide [a] complete service to the beneficiaries. That was one of the good things that we, that we saw.”

Regarding the care group coordination activity, GOM respondents focused less on duplication and service quality and put a greater emphasis on service sustainability as the primary integration success. While IP and USAID respondents discussed successes regarding duplication avoidance, one GOM respondent expressed a need for further collaboration with the government to avoid duplication. This respondent said:

It’s better if they have some resources they want to implement they can just seek information from us. . . . We can give them that information. But sometimes without looking at that they can just go to the community and start working. So it is duplication of resources and energy.
A USAID respondent agreed that while district governments should be heavily involved in the planning for the districts, there are lapses in the system and duplication that still occur. Inconsistent communication with the GOM from USAID programs was an issue that one macro-level GOM respondent mentioned.

GOM respondents also brought up lack of flexibility on USAID projects as a challenge to integration. As one respondent explained, being locked into a geographic focus area makes it difficult for IPs to change their plans in response to an opportunity for integration:

Unfortunately, like you said funded projects if they already have those as their focus areas it’s difficult for them to change. They say with our donor we’ve already agreed that this is where we’ll be working in. Except very local NGOs that have, that are here, you can advise and agree to say, yes let’s go this way. But with programs like USAID, it’s very difficult. It’s like they come here, they’ve already agreed with their donor, you’ll be working in this area. So changing for another area it’s difficult.

Other challenges to integration cited within the care group coordination IA include field staff and community perception of integrated IPs as competitors (USAID: 1 meso; IP: 1 meso), lack of staff time (GOM: 1 macro; IP: 1 meso), different timelines between programs (USAID: 1 meso; IP: 1 macro), lack of a motivation (USAID: 2 meso; IP: 1 macro), and physical distance between IP staff (USAID: 1 meso).

INTEGRATION ACTIVITY: ENVIRONMENTAL MESSAGES IN CHILDREN’S READING MATERIAL

RTI’s (EGRA) partner in the environmental messages integrated activity was Tetra Tech (PERFORM). In the EGRA work plan, RTI explained that “PERFORM will be invited to participate in a Writing Workshop to develop the PERFORM relevant content,” and “EGRA will support PERFORM through the provision of ‘good practice tips’ to inform appropriate content development” for Standard 3 supplementary readers. Regarding the writing workshop, an IP respondent said that EGRA and PERFORM both felt that it was a good investment of time. In 7 of the 10 interviews (USAID: 1 macro, 1 meso; IP: 3 macro, 1 meso, 1 micro) conducted within the environmental messages IA, respondents discussed the improved quality of both programs as a result of knowledge sharing between IPs. Respondents generally agreed that the integration was beneficial in advancing the goals of each program. An IP respondent felt that integration should be more wide-spread, and said:

To me the multi-sectoral approach is the best approach to extension work. That’s the main lesson I have learned.

In addition to program successes as a result of integration, respondents discussed the personal benefit of learning from their cooperating IP’s strengths as another integration success (USAID: 1 meso; IP: 1 macro), and good communication among EGRA, PERFORM, and the GOM as a key enabling factor to the success of this integration activity (USAID: 1 meso; GOM: 2 macro; IP: 3 macro, 1 meso, 1 micro). An IP respondent, however, cited infrequent communication with the cooperating IP as a barrier to the integration.

Though perceptions on the integration between EGRA and PERFORM are largely positive, respondents identified additional challenges to integration, including different timelines between programs (IP: 2 macro), lack of accountability for integration (GOM: 1 macro; IP: 2 macro), and lack of advance planning (IP: 2 macro, 2 meso; GOM: 1 macro). GOM respondents also cited a need for closer collaboration with the government (GOM: 2 macro):

I think there is a need to have a closer collaboration. Otherwise, the partners cannot go straight into the field without going through our offices [DEM]. In the event that something else goes wrong out there, how do they approach us?

INTEGRATION ACTIVITY: SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH REFERRAL AND EDUCATION MATERIALS FOR ADOLESCENT SCHOOL GIRLS

Save the Children (ASPIRE) and JHPIEGO (SSDI-Services) partnered on the sexual and reproductive health referral and education materials integrated activity. Integration work plans for both ASPIRE and SSDI-Services state that SSDI-
Services and ASPIRE will collaborate on referrals for adolescent sexual and reproductive health, data sharing between facilities and provide “technical content in the development of brochures and informational leaflets targeting sexual reproductive health needs of adolescent girls in schools.” Neither work plan goes into further detail about how the two organizations planned to facilitate this collaboration.

In four of the nine interviews (USAID: 1 meso; IP: 2 macro, 1 meso) conducted within the sexual and reproductive health IA, respondents discussed integration in a positive way. The USAID respondent thought the major achievement was getting all partners to “sit at one table with the government.” One IP respondent at the macro level said:

> Of course, it is effective because once the girls are referred to the facilities, they get the service there though it’s not in all the facilities. Because there are other facilities that are not providing the youth-friendly health services . . . . But for those that are providing actively youth-friendly health services, the youth, the girls are free because they actually know they have the services for them, there.

Respondents from USAID and the implementing partners alluded to SSDI-Services providing coordination with health facilities and services and ASPIRE providing technical content for the materials. However, respondents were generally not clear on the ways the two organizations collaborate. One GOM respondent was aware of coordination between organizations but had not heard the term “integration.” In two of the nine interviews (IP: 2 meso), respondents admitted that SSDI-Services and ASPIRE have not come far with integration. An IP respondent said:

> So far, not much . . . has happened between SSDI and ASPIRE, because apart from just meeting some forums, we did not sit down and discuss to say maybe we can integrate in specific areas . . . . I think coming together with them has been kind of a challenge.

Two IP respondents (IP: 1 macro, 1 meso) and one GOM respondent (macro) cited poor timing as a challenge to integration with this specific IA. One IP (IP: 1 meso) cited office location, and 2 (USAID: 1 meso; IP: 1 meso) cited inconsistent communication between IPs (IP: 1 meso). The poor timing problem, or misalignment of program stages, is a recurring problem among IAs. With this IA, an IP respondent said:

> With [our integration partner] we didn’t have any specific forum that we had or meeting that we had to agree on the objectives . . . they were like in the introductory phase of the project . . . . What we knew is [what their focus was]. But we didn’t have that close relationship with them to say we’ll plan together, or we implemented this together.

**INTEGRATION ACTIVITY: SUPPORTIVE SUPERVISION AT HEALTH FACILITIES**

Abt Associates (SSDI-Systems) and JHPIEGO (SSDI-Services) partnered for the supportive supervision at health facilities integrated activity. Abt Associates detailed many key activities in their integration work plan, including

- sharing supportive supervision schedules;
- sending supportive supervision alerts to District Councils, SSDI-Services, and other partners;
- facilitating biannual joint supervision visits at central hospitals;
- facilitating quarterly joint supervision visits for district hospitals;
- working with SSDI-Services to follow up on action plans;
- orienting MOH management teams; and
- strengthening inclusion of pharmacy technicians in facility supervision events.

One GOM respondent discussed the ways this IA has affected the GOM. Activities mentioned included

- capacity building for managers,
- collaboration on referral systems and supervision in health centers,
- resource sharing,
- providing tablets to track indicators and receive feedback on various programs, and
- workshops for district planning.
This GOM respondent regarded integration as a highly effective way to conserve resources and maximize service quality. One macro-level IP respondent also mentioned that the IPs support each other with fuel, allowances, and in the development of a data collection system. In six of the seven interviews (GOM: 1 macro; IP: 3 macro, 2 meso) conducted within this IA, respondents mentioned clear successes as a result of the integration. An IP respondent said:

What I understand is that, for instance, if we are talking of integration we are talking of putting two or three services together, that will by the end of the day be cost effective, not time consuming both to the consumer and provider, plus use less resources to do that. Because it like going to the market for instance to buy salt, tomatoes, and sugar, then you come back and remember you have forgotten relish, that’s nothing. You need to put everything in one basket, so that the person should access them together and that’s what the SSDI has been doing all along.

Other successes mentioned included avoiding duplication, helping one another to achieve individual program goals, and conserving resources, including staff time. An IP respondent said:

As a result of integration, there has been a reduced number of central level officials going to the districts to supervise district level implementation. This provides healthcare staff with more time to focus on their work, especially since these interruptions from site visits have an effect on district work plans.

In two of the seven interviews, respondents cited strong communication between IPs and with the GOM as instrumental in the success of the integration. An IP respondent even described the communication with MOH as “perfect.”

Challenges cited among respondents in this IA were lack of time for joint meetings (IP: 1 macro), and evenly dividing costs between IPs (IP: 1 macro). A GOM respondent (macro) also discussed lack of coordination between funders as a challenge. The respondent explained that when funders do not coordinate, program timelines are not aligned in a logical way. This makes it difficult for the GOM to plan and ultimately can result in inefficiencies and wasted resources. An IP respondent articulated a desire for improved planning to mitigate these challenges:

I think if partners could improve in the planning phase because mostly the challenge that I’ve seen is like implementing partners don’t have . . . similar objectives. . . . So if we could improve in the planning phase . . . and it’s clearly demarcating who’s doing this in the initial planning phase. That could save most of the challenges that partners meet in the course of implementing. . . . So the planning phase is the—something that I can really advocate, if we’re integrating in implementation of a similar activity, we really have to involve each other in the planning phase, to make sure there is actually demarcation of work, it’s actually clear who’s doing what in the initial planning phase.

INTEGRATION ACTIVITY: ONSITE MENTORING AND ACTION PLAN ASSISTANCE FOR LOCAL PARTNERS
Counterpart International (STEPS) and PACT (FISH) integrated for onsite mentoring and action plan assistance for local partners. The key action involving FISH mentioned in the STEPS integration work plan was “review and implementation of the joint action plan with FISH.” The FISH integration work plan was more specific, describing the integration with STEPS as follows: “FISH will share any capacity needs identified through our partnership with CEPA and CISER and coordinate with STEPS to strengthen CEPA and CISER’s performance.” An IP respondent explained the relationship between the two IPs in practice, saying that while both organizations do capacity building, STEPS focuses on institutional capacity while FISH’s strength is technical capacity and implementation. One specific activity that was cited as highly successful among respondents in three of the four interviews (USAID: 1 meso, IP: 2 meso) was the accounting software training that STEPS conducted for FISH’s partners. A USAID respondent explained how the training benefited all parties involved:

PACT [FISH] also bought software for CISER. They didn’t have the technical know-how of using that software. Counterpart [STEPS] came in to train CISER on how to use that software, but the money for buying the software came from PACT [FISH]. So, I saw that as a success.
Another activity that was viewed as an integration success was the organizational capacity assessment that STEPS conducted for FISH. Other successes of the integration between STEPS and FISH included:

- increased accountability between the cooperating IPs (IP: 1 meso),
- duplication avoidance (IP: 1 meso),
- improved data quality and reporting (IP: 1 meso),
- cost savings (USAID: 1 meso), and
- personal development of new skills (IP: 1 meso).

In all four of the interviews conducted within this IA, respondents viewed the integration in a positive light.

While this IA was viewed as largely beneficial to all partners, respondents also highlighted challenges that arose from integration. One commonly cited challenge to integration was the issue of differing program timelines combined with a lack of integration from the activities’ planning stages. This problem was a common theme among all integrated activities. A related challenge specific to this IA was the need to purchase software for use after the trainings. An IP respondent explained that after STEPS paid for the accounting and Microsoft trainings, the partners then had to purchase this software to be able to keep using it. This was difficult because the partners had not included the software in their original budgets. Other challenges discussed included staff turnover (USAID: 1 meso), competition between IPs (USAID: 1 meso), and lack of time for meetings among USAID staff (USAID: 1 meso). Regarding meeting attendance, a USAID respondent said:

We need to join in one of their meetings. We have joined in at all-partners meetings that talk about integration. We haven’t, me and my colleague, the two of us, joined PACT and joined Counterpart to their meetings and probably just being passive listeners. I would go if I had that chance; it would be good if we had that chance.

INTEGRATION ACTIVITY: TEEN CLUBS, SUPPORT TO ADOLESCENTS LIVING WITH HIV THROUGH TEEN CLUB LAUNCHES AND TRAININGS

The Baylor College of Medicine’s Tingathe program and the Dignitas Support for Health Systems Strengthening program integrated to provide support to adolescents living with HIV through Teen Clubs. In Tingathe’s integration work plan, it describes the integration with Dignitas as “supporting Dignitas to expand their adolescent model and ensuring joint planning, referrals and support are going on in the shared facilities in Balaka and Machinga districts.” The Dignitas integration work plan details the following key actions in collaboration with Tingathe: support to adolescents living with HIV (ALHIV) through teen club launches and trainings; joint review meetings with District Health Officers (DHOs), District Health Management Teams (DHMTs), facilities and other key stakeholders; and viral load scale-up and quarterly reviews. Each of the activities described in the Tingathe and Dignitas integration work plans was mentioned at least once in the interviews conducted within this IA. In six out of the seven interviews (GOM: 1 macro; USAID: 2 meso; IP: 2 macro, 1 meso) conducted within the teen clubs integrated activity, respondents discussed specific benefits as a result of the integration. A respondent described the working relationship between Tingathe and Dignitas:

Before these two partners were interacting a lot, Dignitas had only two Teen clubs, but now with Baylor’s support they have managed to scale up to several sites. . . . They are using curriculum from Baylor; they are also using trainers from Baylor to train their own staff on how to run the Teen Clubs. So, that is how they have been interacting. So, as you see naturally they were supposed to integrate. . . . we have seen that partners have been working jointly now with this collaboration there is more joint planning.

Two respondents (GOM: 1 macro; IP: 1 meso) were especially enthusiastic about the positive effect the integration has had on beneficiaries. The GOM respondent said:

These are DHO’s services. These partners are supporting, but we are the major player in this. But without their support, we could not have done it. . . . the Teen Clubs and the social interaction among the teens is actually assisting us so much, and improving drug adherence and also dealing with the issue of disclosure.
Other benefits of integration discussed include duplication avoidance (USAID: 1 meso; IP: 1 macro) and increasing efficiency of site visits (IP: 1 meso). Respondents in four interviews (USAID: 1 meso; IP: 1 macro, 2 meso) cited strong communication as a key factor in facilitating integration. In addition to regular meetings, participants mentioned joint site visits—IPs even make trips to the districts in the same vehicle. An IP respondent also cited the formal agreement the two IPs have as another key factor contributing to the success of the integration:

And I think it’s different with the partnership we have with [our IA partner] and then the other partners. With [our IA partner], we do most of the activities together, while the other partners, it could be just a one-off activity. . . . with [our IA partner] we actually have an agreement, a signed agreement, that they will be doing certain activities and [our organization] will be assisting in certain activities. While the other partners it’s just informal, coming now and again and just asking for some little assistance and then we help them, and off they go.

While the Teen Clubs integration was overwhelmingly seen as a success, challenges discussed within the IA included coordinating between multiple donors (IP: 1 macro; USAID: 1 meso), competition between IPs (USAID: 2 meso), and lack of communication between IPs and the GOM (GOM: 1 macro). An IP respondent mentioned that integration had improved coordination between donors. However, lack of communication with the GOM is a common refrain within this IA and others. A GOM respondent said that communication with district offices commonly cuts off once programs reach the implementation stage. The respondent thought that the DHO should be the “entry point” for programs:

I think the, my take would be, usually I think there are guidelines, if the partner is, if its activities are health related, the entry point is the DHO’s office, okay. So they give the quarter scheme, they share their vision, they share the activities, that is that, that’s the place. But when they start implementing, then they no longer . . . they treat as in there is no more involvement of the DHO. So maybe, what would . . . my plea would, that collaboration should, should not only be when they are coming in the district, but as they implement, there should also be continuous collaboration, which is lacking. So when we see them again is when they exit.

PROGRAM OFFICE ACTIVITIES TO FACILITATE INTEGRATION
USAID/Malawi took its first steps toward implementing the integration strategy at an all-partners workshop on March 18, 2014. This was the first opportunity for implementers to discuss their activities and expertise with each other and work to identify opportunities for coordination and collaboration. To this end, USAID/Malawi facilitated a “speed-dating” exercise in which implementers briefly sat with each other on a rotating basis to find opportunities for synergy. IPs emerged with a set of integration activity work plans that identified “low-hanging fruit,” opportunities for integration that could be readily achieved. The “low-hanging fruit” approach in the first year was essential, as integration was not a requirement explicitly outlined in contracts and cooperative agreements that USAID/Malawi held with its partners. As such, USAID/Malawi sought a way to begin having partners integrate with minimal effort and expense as they built integration into new requests for proposals (RFPs) and in contract extensions and add-ons. Since the initial meeting, USAID has held regular all-partners meetings in September or October (September 25, 2014, October 2, 2015, and September 14, 2016). At each of these meetings, USAID/Malawi has replicated the “speed-dating” approach to identify opportunities for developing IAs. In addition, there was a meeting for flagship projects and IP “integration leads” on September 3, 2015.

The 2016 annual all-partners meeting also focused on responding to the ongoing crisis due to drought through integration, district coordination, and other means. The El Niño drought crisis was also the focus of a food security workshop held in May 2016 to which even IPs in sectors not directly related to food security were asked to come up with ideas for addressing the situation. This was another opportunity to identify possible IAs specifically focused on issues of resiliency.

In 2016, USAID also held district-level “Field 3C Forums” with IPs to address district-level coordination, with one combined meeting for Balaka and Machinga and one for Lilongwe Rural. The purposes of these meetings included preparation for the district government meetings, to figure out to what extent IPs were actively engaging in integration,
and to create incentives for doing so at the field level. These forums also provided an occasion to identify some unique opportunities for regional and household-level activity coordination to improve service delivery. Subsequently, USAID organized district-level meetings with government officials for USAID and IPs in July 2016. The first objective of these meetings was to help plan the District Fiscal Year 2017 budget submission to the Ministry of Finance based on USAID/Malawi contributions and to facilitate identification of gaps within each district.

**STAKEHOLDER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: USAID, IPS, AND GOM**

**USAID ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OVERALL**

These findings focus on USAID/Malawi's roles and responsibilities in implementing integrated development. Respondents addressed these issues in 28 out of 46 interviews.

**Leadership: Setting the Vision.** There was notable heterogeneity among respondents regarding which stakeholder group is best positioned to take an active leadership role with respect to integrated development. USAID/Malawi respondents were most vocal on this issue. Two macro-level respondents expressed a desire for USAID/Malawi to take a stronger leadership role, while two other macro- and two meso-level USAID/Malawi respondents emphasized the need for more local leadership. One IP respondent echoed the desire for stronger USAID/Malawi leadership, while two GOM respondents voiced support for a decentralized approach. These findings suggest that there is an overall desire by all stakeholders for clearer role and responsibility allocation and more active leadership in integrated activity implementation, whether it be from USAID/Malawi or the IPs themselves. Differences in views may reflect a need to distinguish between leadership in design and implementation management.

Sixteen respondents (USAID: 7 macro, 3 meso; IP: 2 macro, 1 meso, 1 micro; GOM: 2 macro) put it more precisely. They felt that USAID’s role is to mandate integration between IPs and between IPs and the GOM. However, as one macro-level USAID respondent mentioned, this created some challenges related to IPs’ adherence to the integration mandate, as some partners had previously been working separately. This respondent acknowledged that USAID telling IPs to now work together may have caused some tension, particularly at the district level. That said, IPs also felt that USAID’s integration mandate is both important and has been instrumental to activity success.

The case for USAID taking a leadership role, at least in IA design, is consistent with other findings about when integrated development should begin. USAID and IP respondents (USAID: 5 macro and meso; IP: 5 macro, meso, and micro) emphasized the need for USAID to start considering integration at the activity planning and development stage. While comments on USAID integration management varied widely across stakeholder groups, this theme was crosscutting. It is especially notable that ten respondents, from both USAID and IPs at all relevant levels of involvement, discussed the need for earlier incorporation of integration into the activity planning process. They expressed concerns that integration was much more difficult and complicated to implement if introduced after the early stages of funding, design, and proposal development.

The desire for USAID to take early leadership in planning integrated development is also consistent with concerns expressed by several USAID/Malawi respondents (3 macro and 2 meso) about forcing integration between partners that do not naturally fit together. Informants in a USAID/Malawi macro-level group interview discussed how the mission’s structure does not naturally support integration. Specifically, it is difficult to merge funding and planning. Respondents seemed to feel integration activities were more appropriate when they involved partners already working in the same sector (e.g., health). This builds on two recommendations from the 2015 SHA about (1) USAID providing clear guidance but allowing flexibility and (2) the importance of integration being a “win-win.” However, it is important to note that not everyone shares the same perception of what constitutes a “win-win”. A meso-level IP respondent explained the perceived benefits of their IA partnership:

> We feel issues of environment are important even to the early grade readers, in the sense that we see the future of our natural resources really also lie in the hands of the youth. And so when we heard and learned
about what EGRA does, that they engage in the youth . . . I think that’s a window of opportunity where we can actually push some of our messages to the youth.

This view, however, contrasted with that of another respondent who felt that while superficially it might appear that an IA is a “win-win,” closer examination focusing on the individual activities’ core objectives may show otherwise. This provides further support to the idea that USAID should take a leadership role in identifying integration opportunities.

Some respondents indicated that this is a lesson USAID/Malawi is already in the process of incorporating. One meso-level USAID/Malawi respondent articulated it this way:

I think what I’ve learned . . . is that integration is very much a means to an end. I think where we’ve run into problems is when we’ve . . . tried to put a square peg into a round hole and integrated for the sake of integrating. What we need to be doing . . . is integrating not for the sake of integrating, but integrating where it makes sense, to achieve a specific end. . . . It shouldn’t be about how many integrated activities there are. It’s not going to work for every partner.

In several USAID/Malawi GIs, respondents also noted that to some extent, the mission is already taking a greater role in leading integrated activity design and considering when it would be most appropriate—a “win-win.”

USAID/Malawi’s success in finding the “win-wins” was evident in five different interviews (USAID: 1 macro; IP: 2 meso, 2 micro). These respondents all indicated that IPs would only be motivated to pursue integration when they can clearly see the benefits of integrating with a particular partner on a specific activity. Another interview with a meso-level IP respondent reinforced this sentiment, saying that their motivation to work with their IA partner stemmed from the fact that both activities were targeting the same population.

A macro-level USAID respondent indicated that generally, some activities are ahead of others with respect to integration. She or he suspects that this is because the staff on those activities can more clearly see the benefits of integration. This is as true among USAID staff as those working for IPs. For example, the same USAID respondent said that the SEG Office provided additional funding to STEPS because staff saw how it would benefit their activities. The same would most certainly be true of any new activities that are explicitly designed from an integration perspective, because they rely on integrated funding streams. This is discussed further below.

USAID’s success in dividing roles and responsibilities between leadership in design and vision on the one hand and implementation management on the other is evident in an existing DG-related activity. Respondents credit the FISH- STEPS collaboration success to both USAID/Malawi’s design and strategic partner selection and to the implementing partners who have executed the vision.

In newer activities, USAID/Malawi is planning integration from the beginning and requesting offerors to specifically address integration in their proposals. The Local Government Accountability Project (LGAP) is one example of this. Four macro-level USAID respondents discussed the LGAP initiative, which will connect USAID with districts. One said:

I will say LGAP for example, it’s not just financially integrated and it’s not just about service delivery, which is the programmatic side, there’s another layer of it which LGAP will serve as our hubs in these districts for USAID planning, so they are helping us with that district-level planning process. The goal is that LGAP will take at least the flagship USAID programs together, get their work plans, help them organize it in a way that is digestible for the district councils . . . LGAP is sort of our intermediary to help us in facilitating that process for us. They will start to do that going forward.

These respondents held high expectations of LGAP in making integration real at the district level. However, one of the four respondents indicated that USAID needed to ensure that partners do not start to rely on LGAP to do their work with respect to integration for them.

One possible unintended consequence of the strong USAID/Malawi focus on integration, mentioned by two USAID/Malawi respondents (1 macro, 1 meso) is that the new integration efforts had changed how resources were
being allocated. They suggested that technical projects and districts not involved in integration activities have been neglected as attention and funding is diverted to integration activities. This is evident below in terms of how AORs/CORs spend their time.

The Program Office Role. The Program Office plays a key part facilitating USAID’s leadership role through its coordination of all-partners, 3C Forum, and district-level meetings. Nine respondents (USAID: 3 macro, 2 meso; IP: 2 macro, 1 micro; GOM: 1 macro) mentioned this as a key USAID responsibility. One macro-level IP respondent felt that a USAID-organized pre-meeting allowed IPs to get to know one another and determine who was doing what in the district, which improved coordination. A macro-level USAID respondent felt that district meetings helped the GOM understand USAID’s priorities and which IPs were implementing in their districts. Another macro-level USAID respondent felt that she or he could coordinate directly with ministries, but that the partners needed to continue engagement with each other to successfully implement activities.

Importance of AORs/CORS. In USAID, IP, and GOM interviews, respondents repeatedly mentioned AORs/CORS as the key individuals across the mission handling the day-to-day vision setting and management of integrated development. Four macro-level IP respondents frequently referenced AORs/CORS as their primary points of contact at USAID. Both macro- and meso-level USAID/Malawi respondents also indicated that AORs/CORS play a pivotal role in integrated activity implementation. AORs/CORS have responsibility for working with IPs to develop integrated activity work plans, among other tasks. Respondents explained that AORs/CORS share a template for integration with the IPs to initiate the process. Then, the IPs identify areas for potential integration, receive feedback from the AOR/COR, and resubmit a final work plan.

While this role is consistent with the AOR/COR role more generally, many USAID/Malawi respondents (4 macro, 2 meso) discussed limitations to staff capacity and frustrations with time constraints. This was often about the extra workload for AORs/CORS to manage integrated activities in addition to normal activity management, but also referred to USAID/Malawi’s overall desire to juggle many projects at once, with the burden for managing largely falling on AORs/CORS. They suggested that AORs/CORS may be more effective if they can focus their time and attention on fewer activities at once. As one meso-level respondent explained:

I had to pay special attention to what was happening in Balaka and Machinga . . . it did take extra work and extra attention to that and extra field monitoring in those districts, and I would say in a lot of ways we ended up paying more attention probably to Balaka and Machinga than to [other districts].

Another meso-level respondent also indicated that because of the extra work involved in monitoring integration, they have spent more time on the integration focal districts and have had to deprioritize the non-focus districts. Indeed, four USAID employees cited the extra time involved in managing integration as a cost of integration.

Likewise, three macro-level USAID employees said that integration adds to the management burden:

From a COR perspective, it does add to the management burden because you now have to sort of negotiate or respond to different groups of people. If it was just the health activity and you’re the health person, and you’re the . . . COR sitting in health, it all starts with you, and whatever it is you need to work with within the health office. Now you have to go to SEG, and they have their own approvals and review systems and things like that, issues of pipeline, because at the end of the day, they have to spend the money that they’ve been given and everyone is under pressure to ensure that their particular part of funds is being used up and not being highlighted as pipeline. It’s an extra bit of work, [to] sort of manage that moving forward.

It should be mentioned that SI noted many inconsistencies in IP integration work plans in their reporting of IAs. Specifically, there were several cases in which one of the partners involved in a particular IA did not include the IA in their work plan. In addition, there were some inconsistencies in how the partners described the IAs. This was also noted by a macro level USAID respondent who felt that AORs/CORS do not have a great understanding of integration, which creates challenges for including integration in IP work plans.
USAID ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: CROSS- AND INTRA-SECTOR ILLUSTRATIONS

USAID’s integration efforts have not only aimed to start the process much earlier, particularly with new activities, but they also demonstrate great flexibility in “what counts” as integration. Whereas previously the emphasis was more on cross-sectorial integration, current efforts include both cross- and intra-sectorial integrated activities. These activities have met with varying degrees of success.

Cross-Sector Integration. The cross-cutting nature of DG activities makes it a central player in integrated activities. Two examples of this are STEPS and the new LGAP activity. However, the critical role played by AORs/CORs in managing activities within USAID/Malawi is also evident. For example, one AOR/COR for a DG activity makes it a point to communicate with activity managers across all other offices with technical experience in the relevant subject matter (e.g., HIV/AIDS) before spending money. This way, she or he can be sure to spend funding in accordance with the efforts of those technical offices as well.

Another example of effective USAID/Malawi leadership with respect to cross-sector integration was the SEG and HPN integrated response to the drought and food security crisis. A couple of macro-level USAID/Malawi respondents said they used climate change, education, early grade reading, PEPFAR, and other “non-traditional food-related fund sources” to purchase food. This creative budgeting has been part of the successful emergency response. One macro-level USAID/Malawi respondent explained that there was some incentive to integrate efforts, since the integration came with increased access to additional funding. Another macro-level USAID/Malawi respondent commented that the USAID/Malawi emphasis on integration made it easier to respond more quickly and in an integrated way to the food security crisis.

In contrast, one USAID macro-level technical office respondent has experienced both successes and challenges integrating with other sectors and expressed frustration that developing projects in other sectors seemed too large a leap because it required working outside of her or his own sectoral expertise.

Intra-Sector Integration. According to one USAID/Malawi meso-level respondent, USAID in Malawi and Washington, D.C., was the first to identify potential for integration between the Njira and INVC activities (SEG). Because Food for Peace (Njira) is based out of Washington, these discussions must involve the D.C. office. One respondent saw this as an example of successful collaboration not only between IPs but also among USAID and IPs. The distinction between design leadership as a USAID/Malawi responsibility and implementation management as an IP function is clear in the success of this integrated activity, for reasons discussed below.

To avoid redundancies or competition between the IPs, USAID/Malawi facilitated their integration, making sure there were no overlaps in Care Groups and coordinating ration distribution to all pregnant and lactating mothers regardless of IP jurisdiction. However, once the integrated activity was initiated, the IPs “took it and ran with it.” They decided the best ways to implement and coordinate. Initially, Njira focused on more vulnerable poor households, and INVC focused on the productive poor (especially in the poor southern districts of Balaka and Machinga, which are also integration focal districts). However, sometimes these differences are less than clear. As one USAID/Malawi meso-level respondent described it, “the line is so thin between the productive poor and the vulnerable poor that it’s really hard to distinguish.”

One reason for success of the integration here is that both are SEG activities. Being part of the same technical office facilitates communication and, in turn, integration, as people in this office attend many of the same regular SEG meetings. According to a meso-level USAID/Malawi respondent, there is a strong emphasis on integration in their office. SEG AORs/CORs also play a very active role in advancing integrated development, making it known that it is important and mandatory. They take an active role in the all-partners meetings and some district meetings. Two USAID/Malawi respondents explained that their purpose in attending the meetings is to listen to meeting conversations, participate in brainstorming integration opportunities, and take notes for future reference. AORs/CORs sometimes talk with activity managers from other offices in advance of the meetings to prepare.

As with SEG, HPN has been quite successful at integrating activities within its sector. AORs/CORs for Dignitas and Baylor work together to review the entire HIV testing and treatment cascade to identify gaps and opportunities to improve
linkages. The AORs/CORs receive quarterly reports from the IPs and recommend that the IPs have joint program reviews to make sure everyone is seeing the full picture. In this way, USAID/Malawi is providing vision and design leadership. Like their counterparts in SEG, HPN AORs/CORs try to emphasize collaboration rather than competition between IPs. As with SEG, one of the strengths of HPN intra-sector integrated activities is that the AORs/CORs work in the same technical office. Therefore, they can more easily jointly review the IPs’ progress reports and avoid any duplication of effort.

KEY DISTRICT LEVEL STAKEHOLDER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
Discussion about key district stakeholder roles occurred in 30 transcripts: 13 USAID, 11 IP, and 6 GOM. Out of the interviews with USAID staff, eight macro- and five meso-level respondents discussed this topic. Of the 11 IP respondents, there were five macro-, three meso-, and three micro-level. Five macro- and one meso-level GOM transcripts were also included.

**IP Roles and Responsibilities.** All 30 respondents across stakeholder groups and levels of involvement discussed the key role of coordination and collaboration between IPs in the planning, delivery, and sustainability of integrated activities. A macro-level USAID respondent felt that although USAID mandates integration, it is up to the partners to have the conversations with each other at the district level to make it happen. This is consistent with some IPs’ view. Nine IP respondents (3 macro, 3 meso, 3 micro) discussed IPs’ roles in planning for the integrated activity. IPs may take on varying degrees of responsibility for planning, depending on their specific role in the integrated activity. For example, with respect to one integrated activity, one respondent felt that one partner takes a leadership role in making sure things are properly planned, while the other provides support. This view is consistent with USAID’s view, as discussed above.

Two IP respondents (1 macro, 1 meso) felt that one of their key roles was in supporting district governments. These respondents felt IPs should develop programs in a sustainable way that would allow continuation of the services even after they leave. When discussing this, the macro-level IP respondent described her or his IP’s role as supporting the GOM, so when the IP leaves, the GOM will be able to continue to provide services. One IP respondent said, “supporting someone doesn’t mean you’re covering everything, you’re just topping up. So, maybe the quality is what will be compromised, but the services will still be there.” This critical role was echoed by a macro-level GOM respondent who said that USAID is encouraging IPs to partner with public institutions so that as the IPs fade out, sustainability is still there.

One meso-level USAID/Malawi respondent suggested the need for an “integration champion” on the partner side to initiate and lead integration efforts. This speaks to the importance of the key role the IPs play in integrated activity implementation management.

**GOM Roles and Responsibilities.** Respondents across all stakeholder groups and with varying levels of involvement in integrated development provided conflicting responses regarding the district-level government role in the planning, delivery, and sustainability of programs. This in part reflects the different levels at which various government entities work. In addition, district-level governments have different roles and responsibilities depending on the nature of the integrated activity. Thus, the extent of the GOM’s involvement is highly variable across integrated activities. Depending on the activity, the district-level government may take on a leadership role or more of a back seat. In some instances, the GOM is the main implementer and therefore very involved in both planning and implementation. Thus, the three key roles identified for the GOM were gatekeeper, planning participant, and partner. As a gatekeeper, the GOM approves activities; as a planning participant, they may take an active role in planning IA implementation; and as a full partner, they are often the entity providing direct service delivery supported in some way by USAID’s IP. One meso-level IP respondent provided an example of the GOM’s partner role:

I think that [the GOM] was the main partner because [they] are the ones that were assisting us mostly with the activities of the community because they are way conversant with the community. So, whenever we wanted
to do any activity concerning the community, we go through the Ministry of Gender and we had to work with them even (on) the trainings.

However, there were conflicting views about the GOM “gatekeeper”/guidance role. One meso-level USAID respondent mentioned that the District Council role should be guiding and directing development within their districts, including managing activities by ensuring there are no duplicative or conflicting projects. This person noted a “bit of lapses in the system” that result in multiple projects conflicting with each other, suggesting that district-level GOM entities may not be fulfilling their “gatekeeper” role. A macro-level GOM official agreed with this USAID perspective saying that one government responsibility is to tell partners where they can or cannot implement activities. She or he provided the example of a pediatric HIV testing program, saying that if there is already one in Balaka, the GOM might tell a new IP wanting to implement a similar activity to do it in another district. However, the respondent acknowledged that although the government is supposed to guide IPs on this, they encounter pushback:

Unfortunately . . . funded projects, if they already have those as their focus areas it’s difficult for them to change. They say with our donor we’ve already agreed that this is where we’ll be working in . . . . It’s like they come here, they’ve already agreed with their donor, you’ll be working in this area. So, changing for another area is difficult.

This view is consistent with that of another macro-level GOM respondent who felt that IPs should consult with the district first before creating a program, rather than coming to the district government after the design phase for approval only. Of specific concern, as illustrated above, is the geography of activity distribution. As one official explained:

Like if I can tell you about [Traditional Authority] TA Kachenga, TA Sawale, TA Kalenga, you’ll find that almost any NGOs there, as partners, implementing similar activities. To find that TA Chanthunya, TA Mkaya, there are very few NGOs that are working there as partners, why? It’s because we have a predetermined area where they are working. But if they can be coming to the district we’d want to ask where can we operate? That would be better. Because it would mean we’re distributing the resources equally.

Another GOM official indicated that this happens because these partners are coming through central level; you don’t have much say. And when they are implementing their activities, when they are coming through central level, they tell you as a district, we are going [to] this area, we’ve already talked with [the] central level to implement this activity. And we’re implementing in fifteen districts, so who’s [the] DHO to say you can’t go there, go this [place instead]? At the end of the day you’ll rubber stamp that one. So they come in, they implement their activities, some of those activities, yes, we need them. But we might not need them where they are being implemented.

Another GOM official illustrated an additional way in which IPs’ work within the same district can be conflicting and not promoting truly integrated development:

Yeah, they should be able to come together and see what they are implementing. Because some of the activities which are being implemented on the ground, they don’t normally talk to each other. If anything, you’ll find that the activities are in conflict. Because you’ll find a certain organization is promoting issues of family planning. Then you’ll find another organization, maybe is being funded by the same donor, is implementing an activity where me as a woman, if I get pregnant, I get free food, I get free buckets, I get free soap. I mean, what is the incentive for me as a woman to be on family planning when by simply getting pregnant I’ll get free things? Is that collaboration? Are the activities talking to each other? So, you’ll see that our indicators are not moving. Because as a nation, when we are planning, we don’t look at our activities in a strategic way. What is it going to achieve on the ground? What is it, the impact of the activities that I’m implementing on the ground? So, you’ll find that one partner being funded by USAID is implementing something, which if you look at it critically, you’ll find that it’s in conflict with whatever that another partner is implementing, funded by the same USAID.
Another GOM official indicated that some IPs, in fact, do follow GOM advice. She or he said that the District Executive Committee guided a USAID IP on where they could work. A meso-level GOM respondent mentioned the same issue of conflicting activities, but felt that it was USAID/Malawi and the IPs’ responsibility to figure it out, implying that the GOM does not play a “gatekeeper” or guidance role. This respondent felt the GOM only approved programs, even if they might conflict.

**SUFFICIENCY OF CURRENT PRACTICES TO MANAGE THE 3Cs PLUS THE FOUNDATIONAL C—COMMUNICATION**

During GIs and KIIs, respondents were asked about current practices to manage the 3Cs (Co-Location, Coordination, and Collaboration). Overall, the 3Cs were mentioned in 23 interviews (USAID: 7 macro, 4 meso; IP: 5 macro, 3 meso, 1 micro; GOM: 4 macro). While USAID discussed the 3Cs in general terms, IPs focused on specific IAs in which they are implementing the 3Cs.

**CLEAR DEFINITIONS FACILITATE IMPLEMENTATION**

One USAID macro-level staff member mentioned that integration efforts improved after receiving clearer guidance from USAID around the definition of the 3Cs. The respondent mentioned that it is important for USAID to communicate what they need to the partners.

Putting that definition to the idea of 3Cs was really helpful, and really having first our Mission understand that this is going to be worthwhile for each of your activities. . . . I think initially the Mission thought [integration] was going to be magic, (and) it’s 3Cs (that) it’s obvious.

A macro-level USAID respondent explained the importance of USAID’s leadership here:

USAID is better positioned to identify strategic opportunities for integration and point them out to partners and somehow facilitate a bit of that space instead of merely saying, go on and integrate, (and) here are the 3Cs, etc.

The benefit of clear definitions is evident in IP responses. Six IPs (3 macro, 1 meso, 2 micro) and one meso-level USAID respondent noted that the close collaboration between IPs contributed to the integrated activity success. A meso-level USAID respondent felt that it was important for IPs to coordinate to ensure activities are complementing each other.

IP respondents provided examples of their close collaboration and coordination for virtually every IA investigated for this SHA. One micro-level IP respondent explained “integration—it’s one of the key elements of success” when discussing how USAID brought two partners together, which increased in the number of beneficiaries served. A macro-level IP involved in another partnership described how they were “having interface meetings, planning together, implementing together.” A macro-level IP involved in another IA partnership described their success at integrating,

So, there was that change that instead of them working as a parallel structure, on their own, and [us] also working as a parallel structure, we’ll go together, and we changed in the sense that we were sharing and working together as a team.

One macro-level IP respondent stated, “We are fully conscious about the 3C mechanism, the colocation, coordination and collaboration,” and that they carried out a “very detailed stakeholder mapping exercise” to help engage partners to improve collaboration. Another macro-level IP respondent explained how the two IPs collaborated by one providing materials and the other providing training. A macro-level IP respondent felt that coordination and collaboration in their IA had been a success. This respondent felt that collaboration between the two projects has enabled them to raise specific issues upon which they could then target their activities. A meso-level IP respondent also attributed the success of their IA to the collaboration, both among the IPs and between the IPs and the communities where they worked. Another meso-level IP respondent also felt that “collaboration has been fantastic”:
I’d say the collaboration has been fantastic. [Our IA partner] has strengths that we don’t and we have strengths that they don’t. So, it was actually, I think a very positive experience. There were some challenges at the beginning, just trying to figure out how to avoid duplication. But in general, I would say that the successes that were achieved through the collaboration were pretty significant, I think.

OVERSATURATION OF THE 3C CONCEPT
Despite IPs’ clear application of the 3Cs, three USAID macro-level staff expressed concern that there may be oversaturation and fatigue related to the 3Cs concept. These respondents mentioned the “futility” of meetings where USAID asks about integration two or three times, suggesting that it becomes “a little bit check the boxy.” Another respondent mentioned “massive fatigue” with the 3Cs conversations. When talking about the 3C forums, another macro-level USAID respondent said:

At least I’m feeling like it’s a mission we’ve sort of maxed out on the value of conversations taking place at a central level among implementing partners, Chiefs of Party, things like that. Our experience, at least what I’ve observed with these 3C forums and then the district engagement meeting and stuff like that, makes me feel like we just don’t have the bandwidth to manage that ourselves.

One possible reason for this, articulated by four respondents (USAID: 2 macro, 1 meso; IP: 1 meso), is that the 3Cs may be better incorporated into new activities. As noted above with respect to integration more generally, it was difficult for activities that had already been implemented separately to then come together. A macro-level USAID respondent noted:

over the past year there’ve been several new procurements . . . across the Mission and in these it is stated specifically that you are required to implement and operationalize the 3Cs . . . so moving forward it may change a bit, but up until now you still do get that tension at [the] district level of: these are all USAID partners, but they’ve been doing things separately.

One USAID staff member noted that FISH is an example of this. Because it was developed after the CDCS was launched, she or he felt that they were better able to strongly reflect the 3Cs in their integration activity:

So, FISH was designed after the CDCS was launched. So, it was one of first activities actually to be fully designed and procured within the time period of the Mission’s CDCS. So, integration as a priority in terms of the 3Cs was strongly reflected . . . within the evaluation criteria, you know, the project design as a whole, and now of course in the implementation structure.

MORE COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION DESIRED
USAID concerns about oversaturation in the 3Cs, however, may be somewhat unfounded, based on a few IP responses. Indeed, two IPs (one meso-level and one micro-level) want more collaboration and coordination. Both specifically mentioned wanting increased district-level planning among IPs through more meetings. The meso-level IP respondent felt that “one aspect that is very important is planning together” and that “continuous engagement is crucial” both among IPs and between IPs and the GOM. This view was also articulated by a macro-level GOM respondent:

Yeah, especially on coordination and collaboration, it would be very much important if we could be learning from each other in terms of what activities, what plans, maybe sharing of plans and budgets, that could be one of the issues to go for, otherwise we’ll find [a particular] project has got its own activities of which no partner knows, it’s only [that project] that knows. Yeah? But if we knew exactly, these colleagues are planning to do A, B, C, D, in this area, and we also have the following activities in these areas, concern universal also has, these are the programs, these are the activities and they are working in this area, I think that would be better, it will be a better start of the collaboration and coordination.
Similarly, a meso-level USAID respondent would like to see partners initiating their own bilateral meetings to talk about integration and coordination. This person also wants to ensure that the meetings are helpful and not “tick box meetings.”

This view was echoed by a macro-level IP respondent, who articulated the need for greater collaboration and coordination as the need for formalizing integration through more engagement forums (meetings) and co-management:

What do we mean by collaboration? If you’re forced to co-manage, it’s your responsibility, it’s my responsibility . . . let’s have, for example, a joint meeting, with a partner present, that’s co-management now, here’s your work plan, that’s my work plan, here’s the partners work plan and that’s how we integrate and, therefore, we show where we’re going to land when we’re going to do joint activity. Or if you’ve done an activity we show them how we can move forward and strengthen that activity.

FOUNDATIONAL C: COMMUNICATION
In 11 different interviews (USAID: 3 meso; IP: 1 macro, 4 meso, 2 micro; GOM: 1 macro), communication was specifically mentioned as a key to integration success. Respondents related to all six IAs examined for the 2016 SHA illustrated the point. In general, they indicated that IPs communicated effectively with each other across all relevant levels of involvement as well as with their relevant USAID and GOM counterparts. Two generalized examples are illustrated below.

A meso-level IP respondent said that staff from the two prime partners talk about four or five times per month on average. She or he could provide a specific number because communication, including emails, phone calls, and meetings, is being tracked. In addition to the communication taking place between the partners, this respondent indicated that the IP provides their AOR/COR a weekly report to make sure that USAID staff are aware of what is happening. The related AOR/COR confirmed that communication has been good on this activity.

Similarly, in another partnership, a micro-level IP respondent indicated that there has been good communication between the IP at the district level and USAID/Malawi. A meso-level respondent working on a related activity also said that communication with their IA partner had been good. This perspective was also shared by a macro-level GOM official involved in the same IA.

Despite these examples of success, some respondents pointed out ongoing issues around communication among various stakeholders as a limiting factor in integrated development. These respondents pointed out disconnects between USAID and the GOM, especially at the district level, as well as between USAID and IPs on the ground and IPs and the GOM. Ongoing problems with communication were explicitly raised in 26 of the 46 interviews (USAID: 6 macro, 5 meso; IP: 2 macro, 5 meso, 2 micro; GOM: 5 macro, 1 meso), as discussed below.

Communication between IPs. Six IPs (1 macro, 4 meso, 1 micro), one macro-level GOM, and three USAID (1 macro, 2 meso) respondents suggested that while good communication is critical to integration, communication between partners can be a challenge. One meso-level IP respondent indicated that poor communication between partners resulted in impossible deadlines, miscommunications, and poor planning. Another meso-level IP respondent indicated that poor communication was a barrier to overcome, but the IA partners eventually improved communication with time and effort. As another meso-level IP respondent explained:

Effective communication is very critical . . . when you miss one another on the communication aspect of it, everything will be disturbed.

A macro-level USAID respondent felt that it was important to get the “guys on the ground” to communicate and to ensure all partners are on board.

The challenge is getting the partners to get out of their cocoons or cells and, you know, understand what we’re trying to do, understand integration. I think to me that was the biggest challenge because everyone wanted to
stick to their project. “Oh this is what we’re implementing.” And what I mean by partners, I want to stretch it from the top all the way up to the guys who do the implementation of the activities. Usually, when we meet in these higher-level meetings, it’s the Chief of Party who will say we’re integrating and we all clap, “Yes, it’s happening!” But when you go down, you will not see it. I think it’s bringing the entire project on board and to understand exactly what we mean by integration and to put that into practice, I think that was the biggest challenge.

In addition to facilitating the work, good communication among IA partners is critical to ensuring uniformity in implementation approaches and to avoiding duplication, according to one macro-level IP respondent. Similarly, a meso-level USAID respondent felt that it was essential that partners harmonize their messages to the communities with which they work to reduce confusion and the spread of misinformation.

Communication between IPs and the District. A macro-level USAID respondent felt that it was important for the Chief of Party to go down to the district level so that district-level GOM officials better understand activity objectives; otherwise, there is resistance.

Communication within USAID. One macro-level IP felt that USAID staff need to “integrate within themselves” and communicate better with each other. Three USAID respondents (1 macro, 2 meso) agreed that there was not enough interoffice communication within USAID. The macro-level USAID respondent felt that AORs/CORs do not talk to one another about the “nuts and bolts” of what their integration partners are doing and instead only hear about it from the IPs. A meso-level USAID respondent shared this perspective, indicating that AORs/CORs should be communicating more closely with each other.

Communication between USAID and IPs. One meso-level IP felt that USAID needed to communicate integration better down the line within USAID and to partners. A meso-level USAID respondent felt that communication is very important between USAID and IPs. Another meso-level USAID respondent felt that achieving this communication, particularly around the message about integration, with partners was difficult.

Communication between USAID and GOM. Eight respondents (USAID 3; IP 1; GOM: 4) mentioned that communication between USAID and the GOM was a challenge. Four macro-level GOM respondents mentioned that although they talked frequently with IPs, they experienced a lack of communication with USAID, saying that they do not talk to nor see one another. One of these respondents did not feel that the district level should communicate with USAID directly, rather, that communication needed to be improved between the Central Ministries and USAID. According to one macro-level GOM official; however,

Communication is a challenge because when USAID wants to communicate, they go straight to the field staff, jumping the [District Agriculture Development Officer] DADO Office. Field staff are more aware of what is happening than the DADO’s office district level. Field staff then phone DADO’s office saying these USAID IPs want to do such and such, are you aware? Normally the DADO’s office is not aware, but they just instruct the field staff to assist the IPs.

Five USAID respondents (3 macro, 2 meso) also mentioned the lack of communication between USAID and the GOM, particularly at the district level. A macro-level USAID respondent mentioned that they do not know who is in charge at the district level. A meso-level USAID respondent felt that there was a communication issue between higher levels and those in the field and that the higher levels decide things without full understanding, and then those on the ground must implement, which can be challenging. Another meso-level respondent felt that communication to the districts was “like playing telephone.” A macro-level USAID respondent felt that there was a cultural barrier and that USAID and those in Malawi needed to work to understand each other better:

It’s not just . . . it’s Malawian culture and U.S. culture . . . it’s more that we’re development people and we’ve got a language on our own—a way of looking at the world from this development perspective. They’re everything from local politicians to . . . we’re just coming from very different places. That will take a long time I think in trying to understand each other, and it would take some time in working together and working through
a lot of each issues—further meetings to better understand where each other are coming, and hopefully it will be the same players or we’re going to constantly be going back to ground one.

This disconnect is also evident in GOM respondents’ apparent lack of awareness of USAID activities. For example, one macro-level GOM respondent mentioned that USAID/Malawi works closely with the District Coordinator and District Health Officer (DHO). However, aside from meetings, there is little mention of interaction with USAID/Malawi. When discussing stakeholder roles, one macro-level GOM respondent felt that it was within USAID’s role to collaborate with district governments, including sharing plans and budgets. One macro-level GOM respondent had an alternative view, indicating that it would not be useful for USAID to communicate directly at the district level; rather, it should communicate only with central offices.

Two IP respondents (1 macro, 1 meso) felt that their role was in supporting district governments and expressed a desire to communicate better with the district governments. However, it was unclear why they felt limited in doing so.

A similar pattern was discussed regarding communications (or lack thereof) between USAID/Malawi and local IP staff on the ground and communities. Three USAID/Malawi respondents suggested that there is insufficient understanding of on-the-ground conditions, and one line staff IP respondent recommended that USAID/Malawi make efforts to engage traditional leaders in development. A meso-level USAID respondent felt that there were challenges in communication because decisions were made at higher levels in USAID, then those partners on the ground must implement them.

OVERALL SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES
In addition to addressing the specific 2016 SHA questions, interview transcripts provided valuable information about overall successes and challenges in implementing integrated development. These are summarized below. This section serves as a summary of key points made throughout this report.

All respondents across all stakeholder groups and levels of involvement held positive views about both the integration goals and implementation process. Thus, despite any challenges, the overall theme is that integration is a worthwhile initiative. Respondents described the positive impacts of integration, noting that it has increased collaboration and cooperation among stakeholders. IP respondents across all levels felt that integration enhanced their activities’ impact. When asked if they could have accomplished their individual activity goals without the integration, many IP respondents indicated that while they could have done so, the impact on the population would not have been as great.

EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS
One of the key successes that is well illustrated by the 2016 SHA focus on specific IAs is how IPs constructed effective partnerships to implement their IAs. IP respondents in four separate interviews, representing four of the six focus IAs, mentioned that they have engaged in joint monitoring with their IA partner. For example, one IP micro-level respondent said that they do joint monitoring when it makes sense and otherwise monitor activities separately and share their reports. Likewise, a meso-level USAID respondent indicated that the two IPs engaged in an IA she or he is involved with send people from both IPs to conduct joint site visits. Similarly, three IP staff at different levels (2 macro, 1 meso) working on two different IAs mentioned that leadership is shared between the IPs. On one, the prime partners alternate who chairs meetings. The two Program Managers in this GI both felt that this was better than having one partner as the designated “leader.” A macro-level IP staff member working on another IA also said that responsibilities were shared between the partners so that no one organization was taking the lead.

INTERPERSONAL SUCCESSES
In addition to organizational level successes, a few interviews revealed that individual-level relationships are also important to the success of integration. For example, four USAID respondents (3 macro and 1 meso) mentioned specific staff that they considered to have significantly contributed to integration success. Additionally, one USAID meso-level respondent said that she or he had learned a great deal about integration from counterparts within USAID/Malawi.
Likewise, six respondents (USAID: 1 macro; IP: 2 meso, 3 micro) mentioned that working on IAs had provided them the opportunity to learn new job skills from more experienced colleagues.

FINANCIAL SUCCESSES AND BENEFITS OF INTEGRATION

Four macro-level USAID respondents indicated that funding streams are becoming increasingly integrated across USAID/Malawi, which they consider a success for integration. One example of integrated funding discussed above is LGAP, which is funded 50 percent by the DG office and 50 percent by the other sector offices. Civil Service Reform is also a financially integrated activity. Similarly, the Health for Life program has received funding from different USAID sectors. Finally, the new Social and Behavioral Change Communication (SBCC) activity was repeatedly held up as an example of an integrated-funding activity that will meet the needs of several sectoral offices.

In eight interviews (USAID: 1 macro, 3 meso; IPs: 2 macro, 2 meso), respondents said that integration saved their project money by avoiding duplication of resources. For example, two meso-level IP respondents working together on an IA indicated that they had saved money by holding joint trainings. They also avoided duplicating resources by discussing what each project had already created. A meso-level USAID respondent echoed this sentiment, saying that her or his activity saved money because it did not duplicate efforts among IPs working jointly on an IA. Finally, one USAID macro-level respondent said that, generally, USAID has saved non-governmental organizations (NGOs) money through integration activities, since they are not wasting resources and duplicating activities and resources.

Respondents mentioned challenges around integration and provided suggestions for changes needed to improve the implementation effectiveness of integrated development in 44 of the 46 interviews (USAID: 9 macro, 6 meso; IP: 10 macro, 8 meso, 3 micro; GOM: 7 macro, 1 meso). As with the successes and benefits discussed above, these, to some extent, summarize findings throughout the report.

REDUCE FEELINGS OF COMPETITION BETWEEN PARTNERS

As noted above, at least some USAID respondents have been working to reduce feelings of competition among IPs. Nonetheless, competition between partners was mentioned as a challenge to integration in 8 interviews (USAID: 2 macro, 2 meso; IPs: 2 macro, 1 meso, 1 micro).

A macro-level IP respondent indicated that rather than focusing on competition, IPs should focus on their complementarities. Another macro-level IP respondent noted that the community saw partners as competitors. A meso-level IP respondent felt that it took time to develop trust and get over that competition “turf” mindset. He explained:

And the, you know, the development of trust took some time. I think at the beginning in particular, there was a lot of feeling . . . sort of, “This is our turf. Why are these guys coming in? We’re already . . . we’ve been working here.”

This respondent also felt, however, that it was important that people get credit where it is due, since that sometimes gets lost when integrating activities. For instance, if they are using a model developed by a particular IP, that IP should be recognized. A micro-level IP respondent indicated that that competition between partners can be exacerbated when they want to impress donors to win funding in the next round.

Two macro-level USAID respondents also mentioned competition between partners and “territoriality” as a challenge to integrating. A meso-level USAID respondent agreed, saying that there needs to be a “culture shift” and that “we’re all one family and this isn’t a competition.” Another meso-level USAID respondent also felt that there was competition between activities. She or he explained that field staff especially do not always fully understand integration and feel competition with one another, such as around who is working in which village.
INTEGRATE FROM THE BEGINNING/PAY EFFECTIVELY

As with other integration-related issues, while some respondents indicated progress toward planning integration at the design stage or early on, 26 interviews (USAID: 7 macro, 3 meso; IP: 6 macro, 3 meso, 2 micro; GOM: 4 macro, 1 meso) mentioned that it was essential for successful integration to start from the very beginning as part of the proposal and contracting process. This is critical so that activities are on the same timeline and partners can jointly plan and effectively demarcate responsibilities. A meso-level IP shared this view saying that partners need to agree on roles and responsibilities with respect to the integrated activity from the start. A micro-level IP respondent felt that good planning was essential to avoiding duplication or dilution of their efforts.

Two macro-level IP and one macro-level GOM respondents felt that integrated activities needed to be on the same timeline to better achieve integration. One respondent felt that activities needed to be more in sync in terms of scope, budget, staffing, structure, and timeline, because otherwise it was challenging to integrate. Another macro-level IP felt that partners needed to plan better at the beginning and clearly demarcate who is doing what. This respondent mentioned that it was difficult, because their IA partner was on a different timeline. Her or his activity was starting when the partner’s was ending.

Another macro-level IP respondent stated that it was essential to do things jointly, share notes, and “plan, implement, do everything together.” Another macro-level IP respondent also felt that there should be joint planning and operationalization. She or he indicated that in their case, planning is currently only being done at the “speed-dating” meeting, which is highly problematic.

Four USAID (3 macro, 1 meso), one macro-level IP, and one macro-level GOM respondents all remarked that it was difficult for partners to integrate if they had already been implementing activities prior to the CDCS integration initiative. Another macro-level IP respondent agreed, saying that, since programs were evaluated by what is in their corporate agreement, integration must be added to it for it to be prioritized. A macro-level USAID respondent shared this perspective, indicating that, when integration was in the contract, it was a “game changer.” Other respondents also noted that the climate for integration should improve as new activities are brought on with integration built into their initial agreements.

GOM respondents also want integration to happen from the start. In particular, three macro-level GOM respondents mentioned that they want partners to consult with the district and USAID to confirm this consultation, prior to implementing an activity.

MORE MEETINGS BETWEEN STAKEHOLDERS

Meetings, as a challenge to integration, were mentioned in 26 interviews (USAID: 7 macro, 3 meso; IP: 4 macro, 3 meso, 3 micro; GOM: 2 macro). Some perceived the all-partners meetings, particularly the “speed-dating,” as ineffective. One macro-level USAID respondent mentioned that committees dedicated to integration “fizzled out due to exhaustion.” Another macro-level USAID respondent felt that partner meetings were “re-runs” and felt that there is a more efficient method for integrating than having partner meetings. However, she or he did not suggest an alternative. A meso-level USAID respondent felt that meetings did not successfully identify gaps.

However, at least some respondents wanted more meetings. One macro-level IP respondent felt that meetings between IA partners were particularly helpful in reducing duplication and providing opportunities to compare notes. Meetings helped this respondent learn what her or his colleagues were doing and determine where they could effectively integrate. One meso-level USAID respondent suggested that partners meet more often one-on-one. Another macro-level IP respondent indicated that regular meetings among partners were important to address issues and jointly develop solutions. This view was shared by meso-level IP respondents working on most of the focal IAs examined for this SHA. One respondent mentioned that they were supposed to have monthly meetings with their IA partner, and although those have not happened, they still maintain regular contact. Two meso-level IP respondents working on the same activity agreed with the importance of regular meetings and felt they did not have enough of them due to the
difficulties in scheduling them. A meso-level USAID respondent indicated that one of the challenges with integration was getting the right people in the room together and committed to engagement.

One macro-level IP respondent felt that they needed to have more engagement from AORs/ CORs that could potentially take place at meetings. A macro-level USAID respondent mentioned that partners requested additional meetings on a regular basis and that more people from USAID should attend. A meso-level USAID respondent felt that meetings were not well-structured, but that they needed to occur more regularly. Again, this respondent did not propose any alternative structure.

A meso-level USAID respondent also felt that there should be more mission-wide meetings to develop new integrated projects rather than choosing activities that were already developed to integrate. Similarly, one macro-level GOM respondent encouraged more meetings among stakeholders, particularly for reviewing the District Investment Plan (DIP). This respondent also wanted more notice before planning meetings, as that would facilitate attendance. Another macro-level GOM respondent stated that she or he prefers monthly meetings or reports from USAID projects.

Three macro-level USAID respondents also felt that there should be more meetings like the district ones that bring together all stakeholders (USAID, IPs, and GOM) to better plan their work. One of these said that it would help stakeholders understand each other and get past cultural barriers. A micro-level IP respondent suggested also involving Village Headmen and community members at planning meetings. However, a different USAID respondent felt that such meetings were not very useful because there was not a dialogue and many invited people did not speak English.

DEVELOP INTEGRATION-SPECIFIC INDICATORS
Integration-specific indicators were mentioned in 11 interviews (USAID: 3 macro, 3 meso; IP: 3 macro, 2 meso). Ten respondents mentioned these as important to monitoring and evaluating progress toward integrated development. One macro-level IP respondent felt that because there were not any integration-related indicators, it was not prioritized in the same way as independent activities, which do have indicators for required reporting.

A macro-level USAID respondent shared this view, stating that clear contractual benchmark indicators on integration were important. There were some discussions on who should provide guidance on the benchmark indicators. The respondent above wanted guidance from Washington, D.C., and a foreign assistance (F) indicator for integration. She or he mentioned that with indicators comes money, because indicators show that integration is “part of the cake.” A second macro-level USAID respondent also felt indicators were needed to track progress, and three meso-level USAID respondents also mentioned wanting indicators, although they were not specific about who should provide them. One meso-level USAID respondent explained, “there should be indicators that are tied to specific integration activities so that the partners are accountable and reports are done on a regular basis.” In contrast, two other macro-level USAID respondents mentioned that during the previous year USAID agreed that indicators would be uninformative and instead came up with a process mapping tool that was more qualitative. Indeed, process mapping was discussed by USAID in the partner meetings in 2016.

INTEGRATION GAUGE: IP PERCEPTIONS ON STRENGTH OF INTEGRATION
The Integration Gauge provides an additional, more quantitative angle on IP perceptions of the quality of their collaboration and integration with each other. Grouping questions into 20 categories under six themes, SI compared perceptions of 11 stakeholders in the present SHA with perceptions shared through the 2015 Collaboration Index survey, a similar tool used to capture coordination and collaboration among partners.

Note that integration was just beginning to take root in 2015, with partners figuring out ways to coordinate and collaborate and grappling with the idea of 3Cs as a holistic approach to integration. But, in 2016, integration activities were in effect for a year, and partners were becoming familiar with the 3C approach. Therefore, SI made minor improvements to the 2016 survey module to reflect more tangible experiences with integration, causing questions to differ slightly for five categories. However, the thematic content of these categories remained the same. We therefore
believe that all categories are comparable between the two years. Questions comprising each category are shown in Annex II.

Results are shown in Table 4. On average, 2016 stakeholders held positive impressions of the quality of their integration with their IA partners for 12 categories, with average scores over 4. Respondents held neutral views for the remaining eight categories, with average scores between 3 and 4. Averaging across all categories, strength of integration was viewed as positive, with a score of nearly 4. This was relatively unchanged from the average 2015 score.

All 2016 respondents reported agreeing or strongly agreeing that

- their integration group is seen as a legitimate leader,
- members see their IA being in each party’s self-interest,
- leaders have the appropriate skills to achieve the IA objectives, and
- informal communication channels existed among partners.

The idea that the activity was in their mutual self-interest received the most favorable views in 2016, as it had in 2015. This supports the qualitative findings that IPs see integration as a “win-win” opportunity. Seeing IAs as in IP’s mutual self-interest (average score: 4.5), having informal communication channels (4.41), and having skilled leadership within the collaborative group (4.36) were the highest-scoring categories, demonstrating areas of greatest strength in integration.

Few 2016 respondents held unfavorable views of aspects of their integration. Three indicated challenges with parties’ ability to compromise; two indicated challenges with having sufficient participation, time, process, or authority for decision-making within their IA partnership; two had challenges with sufficient resources to complete IA tasks; and lack of appropriate membership or communication were reported by one respondent each. Ability to compromise (3.36), layers of participation (3.41), and resources (3.5) were the lowest-scoring categories, suggesting that these issues present the greatest challenges for integration.

Several aspects of integration appear to have strengthened over the past year. Most notably, there was the greatest improvement (69 percent to 100 percent) in agreement (agree or strongly agree) with the idea that outsiders saw the IA group as legitimate in terms of its membership and goals. The feeling that IA partners shared a stake in both the process and outcome improved from 59 percent in 2015 to 82 percent agreeing with this sentiment in 2016. Compared to 2015, more also agreed there were informal communication channels and flexibility among partners to adopt new approaches.

Though most overall views were favorable, several aspects of integration quality did weaken in the past year. The most substantial shift away from a positive view was reported for resources (having sufficient funds, materials, and time available for integration). In 2015, nearly three-fourths of respondents felt resources were sufficient; only 36 percent felt this was the case in 2016. There was also a substantial decline in the perception that people or organizations involved in their IA represent a cross section of those who have a stake in what involved parties are trying to accomplish and a decline in having enough time or authority to make decisions within the partnership.
### Table 4: Stakeholder Perceptions on Integration Gauge Results (2015–2016)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environment for collaboration</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>History of collaboration exists* (increasingly common in districts)</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Collaborative group seen as a legitimate leader in community</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Favorable political climate exists</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership Characteristics of</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>Mutual respect, understanding and trust among collaborators</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collaborating teams</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Appropriate cross section of members included in collaborating teams</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Members see integrated activity as in their self-interest* (and benefits</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>partner org</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Skilled Leadership exists among collaborating members</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Process and Structure in</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>Ability to compromise</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collaborating partner teams</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Members share a stake in both process and outcome</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Multiple layers of participation* (sufficient time, authority for</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>decision-making)</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Flexibility (openness to different approaches)</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Development of clear roles and responsibilities</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adaptability</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Established informal relationships and communication links</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication among collaborating</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>Open and frequent communication occurs* (including leaders with lower staff)</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Established informal relationships and communication links</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Concrete, attainable, goals and objectives* (and clear roles and</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose for collaboration</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>Flexibility (openness to different approaches)</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Development of clear roles and responsibilities</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adaptability</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources available for</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>Sufficient funds, staff, materials, and time available for</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>collaboration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>collaboration* (asked separately about own and partner org)</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Collaboration</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>Overall score</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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</table>

* Questions composing sub-category differ slightly between SHA 2015 and 2016.
** Green indicate scores of 4 and above (strong collaboration); Yellow indicates scores between 3.0 and 3.99
† Number of 2016 respondents: 11. Number of 2015 respondents: 14
CONCLUSIONS

We present major conclusions by the guiding questions that SI followed to conduct the SHA.

1. At USAID/Malawi, what are the roles and responsibilities of individuals in each sector to manage the integrated development approach?
2. At USAID/Malawi, what are organizational changes that have been required (and made, to date) to realize USAID/Malawi’s CDCS objectives through the integrated development approach?
3. How do district-level government entities that USAID has fostered recently collaborate with IPs and USAID in implementing the integration initiative?
4. What are the roles played by key district stakeholders in planning, delivery, and sustainability of programs supported by USAID?
5. To what degree do stakeholders perceive that current practices to manage the 3Cs are sufficient? What can be improved to achieve greater results and improve efficiency?

USAID/MALAWI ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES (Q1)

There appears to be a clear division of labor within USAID/Malawi among the various offices. The Front Office of USAID/Malawi has set integration as a priority, as evidenced by its prominent role in the CDCS. Since the 2015 SHA, this has become more concrete with the Contracts Office, in particular, working with Technical Offices to create integrated funding. This is critical, as one of the obstacles to integration that has been identified is the difficulty of integrating funding streams, which is a critical first step in starting integration from the inception of an activity. However, effectively doing so requires USAID/Malawi to fully embrace its leadership role in identifying opportunities for integrated development rather than relying on IPs to do it.

The Program Office plays a key role in facilitating and championing integration. The Program Office organizes stakeholder meetings, which, although some within USAID/Malawi have questioned their utility, others, particularly among IPs, feel they continue to be useful. One change since the 2015 SHA is that the Program Office has branched out from just the all-partners meetings focused on speed-dating. The 2016 meeting focused on food security issues was especially fruitful, from most participants’ perspectives, as a means of developing cross-sector integrated activities. The focus on the drought crisis and related food security issues gave people a common starting point.

In contrast, the 3C Forums and related district meetings were not considered as productive as the all-partners meeting. There were especially divergent views about the district meetings. Although the district-level GOM generally would like more communication with USAID, they were not prepared to take a leadership role in those meetings. In addition, the outputs intended to facilitate communication between USAID and the district-level GOM officials, such as the activity matrix, do not appear to have had their intended effect. This is not to say that these meetings should be eliminated, but rather that perhaps more effort is required to ensure that they serve their intended purpose.

Technical Offices play a critical role both in vision setting and managing integration efforts. They play a central role in identifying possible IAs, working with others throughout USAID/Malawi. One critical role for AORs/CORS within this is vetting IA ideas put forward at all-partners meetings and then ensuring that they are developed afterward through planning meetings. Without these, it is likely that the IA will not develop. AORs/CORS also have the task of managing IAs once they are implemented. While this management role is consistent with AOR/COR responsibilities more generally, it is important to note that they do add to the workload. Thus, managing integration activities may not always get the attention required, or other activity responsibilities, especially in non-focus districts, may slip.
USAID/MALAWI ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES MADE FOR REALIZING THE CDCS OBJECTIVES THROUGH INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT (Q2)

USAID/Malawi has made several critical organizational changes that have facilitated integrated development. There appear to be increased efforts to design integration into new activities, starting with integrating funding streams, designing activities with integration in mind, and asking bidders on new activities to propose specific IAs. While these efforts may work well for advancing CDCS objectives, it remains to be seen to what extent they will succeed. That said, some existing similarly planned activities, such as STEPs, suggest that there is reason to be hopeful.

For existing activities, USAID/Malawi is actualizing its greater flexibility in accepting both cross- and intra-sectoral IAs. It is also providing more guidance on integration. In both these efforts, USAID/Malawi is focusing on the quality, as opposed to quantity, of integration. Although some still feel that they are being asked to do integration for integration’s sake, it appears that this perception is diminishing. One of the remaining issues, however, is that successful integration still appears to rely on individual personalities and champions. As USAID/Malawi increasingly institutionalizes integration, this may also diminish.

USAID/Malawi is also increasingly holding IPs accountable for their integration efforts through their Integration Work Plans and implementation of DevResults. Despite these efforts, neither IPs nor their AORs/CORs appear to fully appreciate the steps toward greater accountability that have been taken thus far. This is evident in the fact that Work Plans for IAs that were not always fully synchronized across partners were still approved. Indeed, several IPs indicated that they would only feel accountable with specific indicators for integration. This indicates that there is more work to be done on this front.

Finally, USAID/Malawi is increasingly engaging with the GOM at the district level. While efforts made so far, specifically the district-level meetings, are good first steps, considerable work remains to be done to identify and operationalize appropriate ways to improve the effectiveness of this engagement. This is most evident in that GOM officials generally expressed a desire for greater communication with USAID/Malawi and/or its IPs, but did not recognize the district meetings as an effort in that direction.

One area that could benefit from organizational change is the mindset around the time and resources to do integration. Findings from both the interviews and the IG survey indicate that integration can be an additional burden on workloads and resources, but this seems yet to be addressed well by USAID/Malawi.

ROLE PLAYED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF MALAWI AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL (Q3)

As with all other integration stakeholders, the GOM role varies considerably, ranging from acting only as a “gatekeeper” approving USAID activities generally and IAs specifically, to its being a key “partner,” implementing activities with USAID/Malawi IP support. The nature of the role varies depending on the activity.

While the GOM’s “partner” role is relatively clear, since it is a main implementer, the “gatekeeper” function is less clear. To some extent, variation in the GOM’s effectiveness in this role relates to USAID’s communication with both the central and district governments. Some stakeholders felt that USAID should only communicate with the central government and leave district-level communication to IPs. However, others note that this indirect communication is not particularly effective. One of the main concerns expressed by GOM stakeholders is that they are only asked for input after key decisions have already been made. Overall, it seems that USAID/Malawi could make greater efforts to communicate both more directly and frequently with district-level officials to ensure that development plans are, in fact, in line with their priorities.

While the district-level meetings were a good step in this direction, the “leading from behind” approach taken may not have been the most effective. The GOM does not appear to have been ready for a leadership role and may need more coaching on this before being ready to take it on fully. Likewise, while the materials developed for the district-level meetings would have been greatly appreciated, it does not appear that they were disseminated to all the appropriate people, especially the line staff, though the reason for this remains unclear.
ROLES PLAYED BY KEY DISTRICT STAKEHOLDERS (Q4)

IPs play the most critical role in the planning, delivery, and sustainability of USAID-supported activities generally and IAs specifically. This is what their implementation role is all about. Regarding IAs, successfully fulfilling this role requires coordinating and collaborating with both their IA partners and local counterparts. Again, meetings play a central role in these efforts, as that is where all the planning can take place. In the absence of meetings, other forms of communication are used, but they are not as effective as sitting around a table and coming to agreement about who is doing what, when, and where. These are critical decisions, especially for IAs, to both ensure maximum coverage and avoid duplicating efforts. While some IPs appear to have fully embraced integrated development and work effectively with their partners to implement IAs, others have not. This is evident in differences in IPs’ IA work plans: some partners did not mention IAs they were supposedly working on or described them in different terms than did their partners. This, among other evidence, suggests ongoing communication issues as well as a lack of true collaboration and coordination for some IA partnerships. One key limitation to fully embracing integrated development, raised by several IPs, is that they do not feel accountable for doing so, in large part because they do not have to report on any indicators related to their IAs.

SUFFICIENCY OF CURRENT PRACTICES TO MANAGE THE 3Cs (Q5)

This conclusion focuses on the first part of the question. Suggestions for improvement are addressed in the recommendations section.

To some extent, current practices to manage the 3Cs have improved since the last SHA, in large part because of increased clarity in their definitions. This is most evident in partners’ successful efforts at collaboration and coordination in implementing their IAs. That said, there is still some work to do on this front. A notable issue that emerges from the findings is that there is an apparent disconnect between USAID and IPs in their perspectives about the 3Cs. While USAID has concerns about oversaturation both within USAID/Malawi and for IPs, at least some IPs indicated that this is not the case. They look to USAID for greater leadership and direction setting while simultaneously actively working to coordinate and collaborate. Virtually all six IAs that were the focus on the 2016 SHA provided concrete evidence of their implementation of the 3Cs.

Despite clear examples of 3C implementation from most IPs, all stakeholders expressed significant frustration regarding communication problems: within USAID, between USAID and its IPs, among IPs, and between USAID and the GOM. IP-to-IP communication was the least problematic among these. This reflected concerted efforts over the course of IA implementation to work it out. The reason for this is that without communication there is no possibility of coordination or collaboration. The most challenging communication appears to be between USAID and the GOM. As noted above, USAID appears to largely communicate with the GOM through IPs. This indirect form of communication may not be the best way to ensure effective coordination or collaboration. This is arguably one of the most important areas for USAID to address going forward to ensure success in meeting CDCS objectives.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing from concrete examples and stakeholders’ explicit recommendations, SI has developed guidance about the conditions required to continue the progress made toward effective integration. The recommendations for the 2016 SHA build on those made in the 2015 SHA through exploration of the extent to which conditions exist to foster future integration activities. Although progress has clearly been made on several fronts, there is more to do.

PLAN INTEGRATION FROM THE BEGINNING

SI recommends that USAID/Malawi continue to plan integration into new activities as they are developed. This will make IPs contractually obligated to engage in integration and facilitate it by ensuring that the resources necessary for implementation are in place. Finally, there is need for mechanisms in place to track and measure whether integration is happening. Over time, as USAID/Malawi activities increasingly have integration as a fundamental part of their objectives, many of the pain points experienced currently should diminish. For example, the need for all-partners meetings may diminish. Likewise, regular communication, which is fundamental to effective coordination and collaboration, will become part of USAID/Malawi’s culture.

It is critical that USAID play a leadership role in the IA planning process, both for existing and new activities. Likewise, USAID/Malawi should provide IPs the space, time, and support needed to undertake robust planning on multiple levels, with mission guidance. As the findings suggest, USAID/Malawi staff have not consistently been involved in IA planning processes or holding IPs accountable for IA. This is evident in the fact that some work plans did not describe IAs in the same way or even include all IAs in which an IP was involved. To ensure effective integration, AORs/CORs in particular need to be more fully involved with their IPs in the IA planning process. This includes coordinating and collaborating with counterparts within USAID/Malawi. While this is happening to some extent, it could be further institutionalized. However, to ensure this, USAID/Malawi also needs to recognize the additional workload this demands and adjust accordingly.

MUST BE A WIN-WIN

SI also recommends that USAID/Malawi continue to ensure that identified IAs are mutually beneficial to all parties involved. Findings from both interviews and the IG clearly indicate that IPs are increasingly seeing the IAs in which they are involved as mutually beneficial. It is important to continue this trend. This also requires maintaining USAID/Malawi’s flexibility in considering both intra- and cross-sectoral IAs as legitimate. USAID/Malawi should also consider vetting activities with districts (or requiring IPs to demonstrate this vetting as a prerequisite for work plan approval) to make sure that the proposed activity also benefits the district. This should be considered a critical element of district engagement for both USAID/Malawi and IPs.

INSTITUTIONALIZING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE WITHIN USAID/MALAWI

The fundamental shift in the way programming is undertaken to ensure effective implementation for integration development to achieve CDCS objectives has already begun. To continue this process, USAID/Malawi must continue to restructure at least its processes if not its actual organizational structure. As stated in the 2015 SHA, it may be too big a lift to actually reorganize USAID/Malawi away from sectors. However, effective integration does require institutionalization of the processes that facilitate it, such as processes that enable staff to work across sectors. One critical element of this is recognizing the additional burdens in time and resources that organizational changes require and adjusting workloads accordingly. In addition, USAID/Malawi should maintain changes already made in how new projects are funded, designed, procured, and contracted. One critical element to fully institutionalizing integration that remains to be addressed is how projects are monitored and evaluated. This is addressed further below. Finally,
institutionalization is critical to integrated development, because it depersonalizes it. This will reduce the need for integration champions within USAID/Malawi and IPs and will also ensure sustainability despite turnover among USAID/Malawi personnel.

COMMUNICATION AS THE FOUNDATIONAL C
As indicated in the findings, communication continues to be a serious pain point for integrated development. This is arguably the crucial factor in facilitating IA development, implementation, and management, as it is fundamental to effective coordination and collaboration. In other words, the 3Cs are not possible without effective communication. Although communication has improved within USAID/Malawi and between USAID/Malawi and its IPs, there is still some work to do on this front, as it remains inconsistent. However, the biggest challenge for USAID/Malawi and IPs is more effectively communicating with district governments. The district meetings were a good first step in this direction, but there is more to do. One important first step in this process is identifying who the right people are to talk with and ensuring they are present at critical meetings. Likewise, when USAID/Malawi shares valuable resources like the materials developed for the district meetings, they need to ensure they get into the right hands. Finally, USAID/Malawi should establish some structures to ensure ongoing regular communication and collaboration with the GOM. LGAP may provide the mechanism for doing this going forward, but if not, another approach should be developed.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND MEASURING INTEGRATION
Organizational change involves integrating programming within and across sectors to facilitate achieving USAID/Malawi’s development objectives and, ultimately, its goal of improving quality of life for Malawians. However, despite the centrality of integrated development in the CDCS, there are no indicators and objectives explicitly defined for integration. In addition, there are no targets beyond the intent for project saturation in three focus districts. Therefore, it continues to be difficult for USAID/Malawi staff and IPs to know what they should be working toward for integration and whether they have sufficiently integrated their programming. SI recommends that USAID/Malawi’s latest structure of a process mapping to track progress toward integration be operationalized and carefully examined for effectiveness, and improved if needed. Also, simple indicators can be developed to track integration success and challenges. This is critical to providing a means of holding both USAID/Malawi and IPs accountable. It is also critical for facilitating ongoing collaboration, learning, and adaptation.
ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDES

INTERVIEW GUIDE: DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVES

Objectives:

- Outline the district objectives and discuss whether IP activities align with district level objectives
- Understand how IPs coordinate and collaborate activities among themselves
- Understand how IPs coordinate and collaborate with the District
- Successes and challenges encountered
- Examine the role of USAID and other donors (Development Partners) in collaborating and coordinating with the District
- If you are talking to the DPHO or other health people, learn how the District Health Stakeholder Forum (supported by SSDI Systems) has been working as a venue for coordination and collaboration

1. I want to begin our conversation today first by thanking you for your time and second by asking you generally to describe your overarching objectives here in the district as they relate to food security, nutrition, education, and health. We understand that the details will be explained in the District Government Plans. However, it would help us frame our conversation today if we could discuss this briefly.

2. Now that we have an idea of what your objectives are, we would like to learn more about the coordination and collaboration around the activities funded by USAID and implemented by such organizations and programs as INVC, MISST, EGRA, NJIRA, ASPIRE, SSDI, FUM, CADECOM, and others.
   a. Do you believe that these partners are working to reach the objectives you’ve described in the District Governance Plans? Please explain, with some examples.
   b. Are the partners collaborating with one another? If yes, please provide examples.
   c. Are the partners collaborating with you as the District? If yes, please explain how.
   d. Are you able to tell us about some of the successes and challenges you have encountered ensuring coordination and collaboration among the District and those organizations that are implementing programs?

3. We know that you work with numerous development partners including USAID, DFID, JICA, the UN, the World Bank, and others. We would like to learn if and how you are working with USAID directly. If so, can you tell us little bit about how you work with USAID? If not, can you explain the ways in which you would like to coordinate and collaborate with USAID?

4. We are tasked with providing USAID on guidance on how to collaborate and coordinate with district governments. Can you provide us examples from your experience, either with USAID or other development partners, regarding how to successfully coordinate and collaborate your activities? Are there particular challenges you have encountered coordinating and collaborating with development partners?

INTERVIEW GUIDE: IPS, SUB-PARTNERS, AND OTHER CBOS

NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: Try to make the interview as conversational as possible. Do not feel that you need to ask every question exactly as it is stated here. Rather, let the conversation flow. Sometimes, responses from one question will answer another. The biggest job of the interviewer is NOT asking questions; it is listening to answers. Your goal for this interview should include the following:

- Identify and describe the integration activities they are working on and who they are working with and their objectives
• Select one or two activities and then get examples of how they are doing coordination and collaboration (e.g., How did they come to decide who does what and pays for what? Have they decided how to measure progress? Is there a particular individual who takes a leadership role? How are roles and responsibilities determined? How did you determine your mutual objectives?)
• Explore successes and challenges IPs have encountered implementing integrated activities.
• Understand if and how they are working with district and local governments and if there is a value added to working with them
• Learn about the role that USAID plays in integration and how they may better be able to support/guide their activities.

USEFUL PROBES:
• What would it take to overcome this challenge?
• Can you give an example?
• What is the value of this to your organization?
• What did you take away from that experience?
• Why do you think that happened?
• How did you accomplish that?

PROTOCOL TO DRAW ON:

1. First, I want to find out more about the integration activity/activities you are taking on. That will help us focus our interview on one or two particular activities.
   NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: Try to come up with a name for that activity so that you can refer back to it at a later time
   a. What integrated activity or activities did you take on over the past year?
      i. Which of these were within your project? And which ones crossed with other projects?
      ii. What sectors did they include?
      iii. What are the objectives for those activities?
      iv. Who are your partners in carrying out this activity? Note to Interviewer: This should not only be partners of the main IP but even the organizations that are doing the “boots on the ground” work and other entities that do not directly receive funds, such as community health groups, civil society organizations, etc.
         1. Other INGOs or NGOs?
         2. Civil Society Organizations
         3. Community-Based Organizations
         4. Other?
      v. In which communities are you rolling out these activities?
   NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: See if they can provide you with list of both the organizations/groups they are working with as well as a list of communities they are working in, if they have one available. Is it something they can email to you later?
   b. Have you developed any plans for new upcoming activities during the September 3 meeting?
      NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: Select one or two activities to focus on for the remainder of the interview. The activities should be ones they have already starting implementing, if possible, so they can reflect on their experiences and say how they would do the things the same or differently in the future. Say the following to the interviewee:
      For the remainder of the questions I want to focus on __________________________
      activity/activities
   2. I want to dig down a little bit deeper into the idea of integration to understand what it means, how it is operationalized, and what purpose it serves.
a. How does USAID define integration?
b. How does your organization define or carry out integration? NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: It is okay if they define them differently. Make sure to reassure the respondent about this. Remind them that we are helping USAID refine their definition.
c. What purpose does integration serve?

TRANSITION TO DISCUSSION OF COORDINATION
d. Coordination (Goal: Help USAID define collaboration and how IPs are DOING coordination)
   i. Can you give me some examples of how you are coordinating with your partners on this activity?
   ii. Drawing from those examples, is there a particular way you might define coordination or specific guidelines you could give USAID to determine what counts as coordination?
   iii. What is the objective of coordinating?

TRANSITION TO THE DISCUSSION OF COLLABORATION
e. Collaboration (Goal: Help USAID define collaboration and how IPs are DOING collaboration)
   i. Now, can you give me some examples of how you are collaborating?
   ii. Drawing from the examples you just provided, is there a particular way you would define collaboration or specific guidelines you could give USAID to determine what counts as collaboration? What is the objective of collaborating?

3. Now I would like to understand a little bit about how you are engaging with governments at different levels and in what ways. Specifically, I want to focus on district-level government structures and local government structures.

a. Are you collaborating/coordinating with individuals from the district government?
   i. If so, how?
   ii. With whom?
   iii. Examples.
b. Are you collaborating/coordinating with individuals from the local government?
   i. If so, how?
   ii. With whom?
   iii. Examples?

4. As you know, we are here to help undertake a stakeholder analysis to help USAID see where they are with integration. So, at this point, we want to learn a little bit more about the ways you are working with USAID and the role USAID is playing in this initiative.

a. What is USAID’s current role in the integration process?
b. What are the ways that they have helped you move your integrated activity forward?
c. Are there ways in which you need additional assistance or guidance from USAID? Please try to be specific as possible. If you want guidance, what type of guidance?

5. Understanding the successes and challenges IPs have faced implementing integration activities.

a. What successes have you experienced implementing an integrated activity? And has that resulted in successes in your project overall?
b. What challenges have you experienced implementing an integrated activity? And has that prevented you from reaching success in your overarching project? If so, how?
c. What guidance would you give USAID for integration to be implemented successfully?
ANNEX II: INTEGRATION GAUGE

Through this tool, we are tracking how you are working with your collaborative partners on integration activities. Your collaborative partners include those organizations and institutions with whom you are working to implement an integrated activity. This may include such groups as other prime USAID implementing partners (IPs), sub-partners, district representatives, community-based organizations, and/or civil society organizations. Our objective is to assess the degree to which USAID’s partners are collaborating and the ways in which this collaboration is occurring. The first two questions are broad questions about integration in the development community. For the remainder of the items, we will have you focus on one single integration activity that we will decide on together.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Sub-categories</th>
<th>Survey questions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environment for collaboration</td>
<td>History of collaboration exists* (increasingly common in districts)</td>
<td>1. Integrated activities (like this) in districts we work have increased in past 2 years</td>
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<td>2. Trying to solve problems in the districts we work through integration (like this) is becoming common in past 2 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaborative group seen as a legitimate leader in community</td>
<td>3. Leaders within the development community who are not a part of this integrated activity seem hopeful about what our integration activity can accomplish.</td>
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<td>4. Others in the development community who are not a part of this activity would generally agree that the organizations involved in this project are the “right” organizations to make this work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Favorable political climate exists</td>
<td>5. The political and social climate seems to be “right” for an integrated activity like this.</td>
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<td>6. The time is right for this integrated activity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Membership Characteristics</td>
<td>Mutual respect, understanding</td>
<td>7. People involved in our integrated activity always trust one another.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Process and Structure in collaborating partner teams</td>
<td>Ability to compromise</td>
<td>13. People involved in our integrated activity are willing to compromise on important aspects of our integrated activity.</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Members share a stake in both process and outcome</td>
<td>14. Our integration partners invest the right amount of time in our integration efforts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multiple layers of participation* (sufficient time, authority for decision-making)</td>
<td>15. Every integration partner involved in our integrated activity wants this project to succeed.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>16. The level of commitment among our integration partners is high.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>17. There is always enough time for all of us involved in this integrated activity to jointly discuss and make decisions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>18. The level of commitment among our integration partners is high.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19. Each of the people who participate in joint decision making can speak for the entire organization they represent, not just a part of it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flexibility (openness to different approaches)</td>
<td>20. There is a lot of flexibility when joint decisions are made; people are open to discussing different options.</td>
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<tr>
<td>21. People involved in this activity are open to different approaches regarding how we can do our work well.</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. People involved in this activity are willing to change our ways of working to help the activity succeed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Development of clear roles and responsibilities</td>
<td>18. There is a clear process for making joint decisions among the partners in this integrated activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>36. People involved in this activity have a clear sense of roles and responsibilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adaptability</td>
<td>23. Our collaboration (with our partners) for the integrated activity is able to adapt to changing conditions, such as fewer funds than expected, changing political climate, or change in leadership.</td>
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<td>24. Our collaboration (with our partners) for the integrated activity has the ability to survive even if it had to make major changes in its plan or add some new activities or locations in order to reach its goals.</td>
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<td>Appropriate pace of development</td>
<td>25. Our integrated activity has tried to take on the right amount of work at the right pace.</td>
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<tr>
<td>26. We (collaborators) are currently able to keep up with the work necessary to coordinate with all the other people, organizations and actions needed for the activity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication among collaborating members</td>
<td>27. People involved in this integrated activity communicate openly with one another.</td>
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<td>28. I am informed as often as I should be about what goes on in the integration activity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leaders with lower staff</td>
<td>29. The leaders of the activity communicate well among themselves</td>
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<td></td>
<td>30. The leaders of the activity communicate well with all the staff who are involved in the activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Established informal relationships and communication links</td>
<td>31. Communication among the people involved in this activity happens both at formal meetings and in informal ways.</td>
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<td>32. I personally have informal conversations about the integration activity with others who are involved in the activity</td>
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<td>Purpose for collaboration</td>
<td>33. I have a clear understanding of what we are trying to accomplish through our integration activity.</td>
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<td>34. People involved in the activity know and understand the goals of our integration activity.</td>
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<td>35. Leaders of the activity have established reasonable goals for our integration activity.</td>
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<td>Shared vision exists</td>
<td>37. The people involved in the activity are dedicated to making this activity succeed</td>
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<td>38. My ideas about what we want to accomplish with this integrated activity seem to be the same as the ideas of others involved in the activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unique purpose</td>
<td>39. What we are trying to accomplish with our integrated activity would be difficult for any single organization to accomplish itself.</td>
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<td>40. No other organization in the community is trying to do exactly what we are trying to do.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resources available for collaboration</td>
<td>41. Our organization has adequate funds to do what we want to accomplish through this activity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>time available for collaboration* (asked separately about own and partner org)</td>
<td>42. Our organization has adequate “people power” to do what we want to accomplish through this activity.</td>
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<td>43. Our integration partner has adequate funds to do what we want to accomplish through this activity.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44. Our integration partner has adequate “people power” to do what we want to accomplish through this activity.</td>
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